



West Belconnen Community and Stakeholder Consultation

Phase 1 Summary Report

Client:

Riverview Projects (ACT) and The Land Development Agency

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1 Executive Summary

In June 2013, the ACT Government announced an agreement with Riverview Projects (ACT) Pty Ltd (Riverview), a locally owned land development company, to facilitate the planning and development of some 4,500 new homes in West Belconnen in the ACT over the next decade. Consultation undertaken prior to and since the announcement has found the concurrent rezoning of Parkwood land, i.e. the ACT land generally east of Parkwood Road (including the Parkwood eggs site), and the adjoining NSW land is logical and timely.

Since the ACT Government's announcement in June 2013 there have been two stages of community and stakeholder engagement associated with the master planning or pre-statutory planning phase of the West Belconnen project. The first stage, June – December 2013, was focussed on informing the community and stakeholders about the project and gaining input into the project vision and preliminary draft master plan. The second stage, January – April 2014, focussed on refining the draft master plan and addressing issues that were highlighted by the community and stakeholders.

A key step in the rezoning process is the development of a master plan underpinned by a range of technical studies. A preliminary draft master plan was developed over a four day period in November 2013, commencing with a Community and Stakeholder Vision Workshop followed by a Planning and Design Forum (PDF). The outcomes of the Community and Stakeholder Vision Workshop became an important input to the PDF that was held over the following three days.

This report provides an overview of the activities and outcomes of community and stakeholder consultation undertaken from June 2013 – April 2014, including the Community and Stakeholder Vision Workshop and Planning and Design Forum.

2 Introduction

In June 2013, the ACT Government announced an agreement with Riverview Projects (ACT)¹ Pty Ltd (Riverview), a locally owned land development company, to facilitate the planning and development of some 4,500 new homes in West Belconnen in the ACT over the next decade.

Consultation undertaken prior to and since the announcement has found the concurrent rezoning of Parkwood land, i.e. the ACT land generally east of Parkwood Road (including the Parkwood eggs site), and the adjoining NSW land is logical and timely. The adjoining NSW land is landlocked by the Murrumbidgee River and Ginninderra Creek.

Riverview is the project manager for the planning of West Belconnen, acting on behalf of the ACT Government with respect to the ACT land, and on behalf of the developer for part of the NSW side.

The proposed West Belconnen development site is situated in the western corner of the Belconnen District of the ACT. Crossing the border of NSW and the ACT, West Belconnen is surrounded by a number of established ACT communities, such as Holt and Macgregor in the ACT, and rural parts of Yass Valley Shire on the NSW side.

This project will create significant change for North West Canberra and neighbouring NSW. The Project Team, led by Riverview and the ACT Government's Land Development Agency, understand that people who live in the areas adjacent to the proposed development will have a direct interest in the future of West Belconnen. The project team are committed to working with stakeholders and these neighbouring communities to shape a future for West Belconnen.

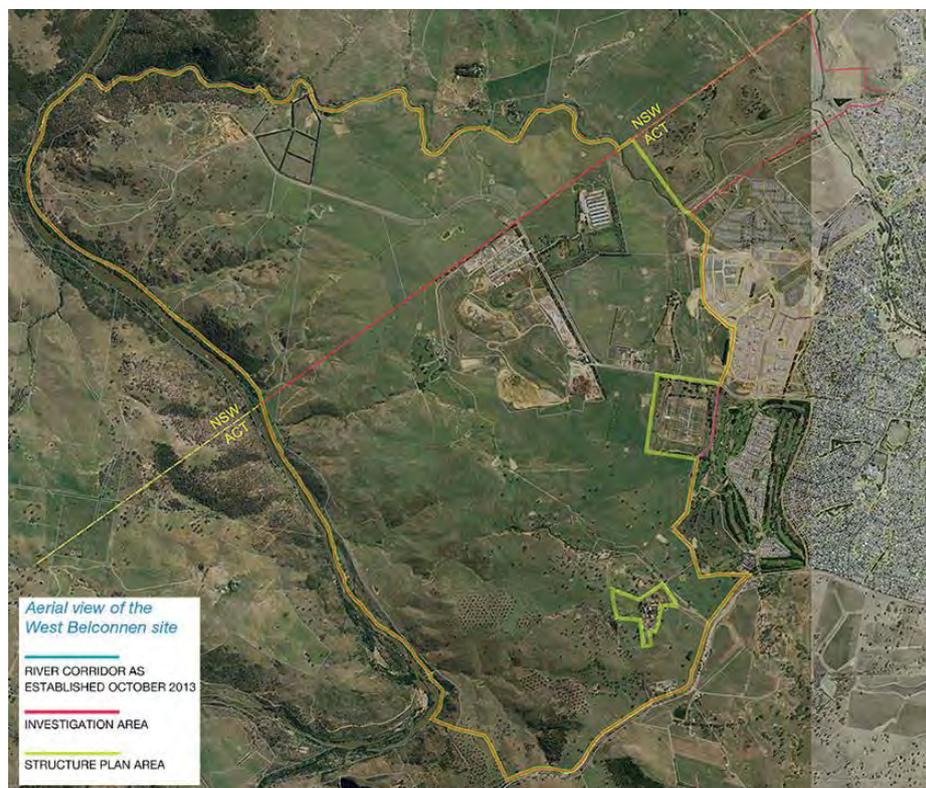


Figure 1 The West Belconnen 'investigation area'

¹ At the time of the announcement Riverview Projects (ACT) were known as The Riverview Group.

2.1 Purpose of this report

Since the ACT Government's announcement in June 2013 there have been two stages of community and stakeholder engagement. The first June – December 2013 was focussed on informing the community and stakeholders about the project and gaining input into the project vision and preliminary draft master plan. The second stage January – April 2014 focussed on refining the draft master plan and addressing issues that were highlighted by the community and stakeholders.

This report provides an overview of the activities and outcomes of community and stakeholder consultation undertaken from June 2013 – April 2014. It outlines our engagement approach and activities, and details the community and stakeholder feedback received throughout this period.

It is a summary of the following community and stakeholder consultation outcomes reports, which should be consulted for more detailed information:

- » *Community and Stakeholder Vision Workshop and Planning and Design Forum Outcomes Report*
- » *Stage One Community Consultation Summary Report: June 2013 to December 2013*
- » *Stage Two Community Consultation Summary Report: January 2014 to April 2014*

This summary report has been prepared by Elton Consulting on behalf of Riverview and the ACT Land Development Agency.

3 Engagement Approach

3.1 Guiding principles

Our engagement philosophy is guided by six key principles which are widely used and generally accepted. These principles have provided the foundation to the engagement practices undertaken throughout the project.

1. *Communication*: Develop a two-way dialogue between the project team, stakeholders and the community that provides clear, accurate and relevant information.
2. *Transparency*: Provide clear, quality and timely information to stakeholders and the community to ensure reporting processes are effective and meaningful.
3. *Collaboration*: Establish seamless working relationships within the project team and with stakeholders so that all parties involved in the process work cooperatively and effectively to share information to achieve good outcomes.
4. *Inclusiveness*: Recognise that stakeholders and members of the community come from a range of culturally diverse, social backgrounds and ages that require differing communication approaches.
5. *Integrity*: Conduct engagement in a manner that fosters mutual respect and trust, and that builds and maintains stakeholder and community relationships.
6. *Reflection*: Review engagement activities and outcomes to gain an understanding of the effectiveness of our engagement approach and methodology to ensure we are meeting the needs of stakeholders and the community.

3.2 Engagement objectives

The key objectives of community and stakeholder engagement have been to:

- » Provide quality information that is accurate and relevant to stakeholders and the community at each stage of the project.
- » Provide opportunities for stakeholders and the community to comment on the proposed plans to the project team.
- » Establish relationships with key stakeholders that can benefit the project now and in the future.
- » Seek relevant and productive feedback from consultation process in a format that can directly feed into the planning and design process.
- » Assist the project team to understand the local and regional context.
- » Provide the project team with the opportunity to incorporate stakeholder feedback into the planning and development process.
- » Provide a process for project features and engagement activities to be reviewed and where appropriate improved.
- » Fulfil government and Green Star engagement requirements all the way through the project.

3.3 Consultation prior to June 2013

Riverview commenced discussions with the ACT Government in late 2007. These discussions were initially with the LDA as the agency responsible for land development. Subsequently (from 2008 onwards) meetings were held with representative from across ACT Government agencies², including:

- » the ACT Planning and Land Authority;
- » the Chief Minister's Department;
- » Territory and Municipal Services (TAMS) including ACT Parks and Conservation;
- » ACT Department of Environment, Climate Change, Energy and Water;
- » ACT Department of Housing and Community Services; including the Office of Multicultural, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs

Members of the Legislative Assembly were also briefed about the proposal and had the opportunity to provide feedback.

In October 2010 an Interdepartmental Committee was established involving relevant ACT Government agencies to progress discussion of a potential joint venture for West Belconnen. The outcome of the IDC process was submitted to the ACT Government Cabinet for consideration and ultimately resulted in the Heads of Agreement that was announced in June 2013.

Discussions began with the Yass Valley Council in 2009. This included meetings with the Mayor and senior Council staff. Discussions commenced with NSW Government agencies in 2010, primarily with the Department of Planning and Infrastructure. Other agencies that were involved in discussions included the Department of Premier and Cabinet, the Department of Trade and Investment and the National Parks and Wildlife Service. The first meeting with the National Capital Authority also occurred in 2010.

Discussions began with other key stakeholders from July 2011. These included meetings with representatives of key community groups, such as:

- » Belconnen Community Council;
- » Kippax UnitingCare;
- » Canberra Business Council;
- » Conservation Council;
- » Murrumbidgee Ginninderra Gorges National Park Association;
- » Friends of Grasslands;
- » No Carbon Pty Ltd;
- » Molonglo Catchment Group;
- » United Ngunnawal Elders Council;
- » Billabong Aboriginal Development Corp; and
- » Onerwal Aboriginal Land Council.

² ACT Government agency names changed a number of times during the period 2008-2014, including the restructure that resulted in the Directorates.

Engagement with the neighbouring landholders in NSW (on the eastern side of the Murrumbidgee River and Ginninderra Creek) also commenced in 2011. This was both to inform them of the project, and to gain an understanding of their interest in the project.

The pre-announcement consultation revealed that some key themes were common across stakeholders. These included:

- » The desire for a range of housing options, including housing at the affordable end of the market;
- » Sustainable energy use at the household level and across the community;
- » Good public transport options and decreased reliance on cars;
- » Increased options for recreation for all people in West Belconnen; and
- » A new development that is a natural extension of, and does not detract from, the existing suburbs of West Belconnen.

4 Engagement Activities

The following section outlines the engagement activities that were undertaken between June 2013 and April 2014. The outcomes of these activities are detailed in subsequent sections.

4.1 Consultation timeline

| Activity | Timing |
|---|------------------------------|
| Stage 1: June 2013 to December 2013 | |
| Community liaison interviews | June – December 2013 |
| Website launch | November 2013 |
| Newsletter 1 | November 2013 |
| Community Vision and Values Workshop | 11 November 2013 |
| Planning and Design Forum | 12 – 14 November 2013 |
| People and Place Group Meeting 1 | 5 December 2013 |
| Newsletter 2 | December 2013 |
| Stage 2: January 2014 to April 2014 | |
| Newsletter 3 | February 2014 |
| West Belconnen Training and Employment Initiative | 5 – 7 February 2014 |
| People and Place Group meeting 3 | 17 February 2014 |
| Community Information and Feedback Sessions | 20 & 22 February 2014 |
| Child and Youth Engagement | February – May 2014 |
| Continuous engagement | |
| Project website | Ongoing |
| Social media | Ongoing |
| Project Office | Ongoing (from February 2014) |
| Community Liaison | Ongoing |

4.2 Methods

The following methods of stakeholder and community consultation have been utilised throughout phase 1 of the West Belconnen project.

Community Information and Feedback Sessions

Two Community Information and Feedback Sessions were held in February 2014 at Kippax Fair shopping centre in Holt, West Belconnen. The CIFS were designed to provide community members with information on the project and the draft master plan. Community members were also able to interact directly with key members of the project team who were present at each session and available to answer questions and record feedback. Feedback forms were available for community members to complete on the day or return later.

These sessions were a key source of community feedback throughout the consultation process, and the outcomes are detailed in Section 6 below.

Community Vision and Values Workshop

Immediately prior to the Planning and Design Forum a community and stakeholder vision and values workshop “creating a vision for West Belconnen” was held on the evening of 11 November 2013.

Almost 100 people attended to hear about what is planned at West Belconnen. The community also took the opportunity to provide feedback on important things the project team needs to keep in mind as they plan and design the new community.

This event was advertised in the Canberra Times and the Chronicle and Yass Tribune. Other channels were also utilised including:

- » Online event advertisements on the ACT Government’s Time to Talk website, Eventbrite, ActewAGL/Mix 106.3 Community Switch, and the Belconnen Community Council Calendar;
- » Community emails distributed via the West Belconnen Health Co-op;
- » Flyers distributed through Kippax Uniting Church; and
- » Posters and flyers displayed at local shopping centres, libraries, and other community centres.



Planning and Design Forum

The issues and ideas that were identified at the Community and Stakeholder Vision Workshop became an important input to the Planning and Design Forum (PDF) that was held over the following three days, 12 to 14 November at Bruce CIT.

The PDF was an interactive series of workshops which combined the skills and experience of decision makers, technical experts and key community representatives to jointly explore project challenges and design options that reflect the West Belconnen sustainability vision and the emerging community values.

Bringing together all major stakeholders in one place at one time allowed for open and constructive discussion and a shared project understanding. It culminated in the preliminary draft West Belconnen master plan. The broader community were invited to a number of sessions during the PDF to ensure that community interests and values were clearly articulated and understood from the beginning and to enable the project team to present the concepts and receive feedback to inform the preliminary draft master plan.

Project Office

The Project Office was opened in mid-February 2104 at the Kippax Centre. The Project Office showcases a large-scale 3D model of the West Belconnen site along with story boards providing information about the project and the draft master plan. The Project Office is open during business hours Monday-Friday (as well as outside of business hours on Tuesday evenings) for community members to drop by, find out more information about the project and provide feedback.

Community Liaison

The community liaison officer (CLO) was appointed at the beginning of the consultation process and has continued as the main point of contact between stakeholders, the community, the LDA, and Riverview.

The role of CLO was undertaken by [REDACTED] of Strategic Development Associates. [REDACTED] has been working closely with Riverview and Elton Consulting to ensure seamless engagement with key stakeholders and the broader community.

In addition to the work undertaken by the CLO, Riverview themselves participated in a wide range of meetings with members of the community and stakeholders to discuss the project, address issues of concern and obtain feedback.

West Belconnen Training and Employment Initiative

Riverview invited a representative of Renewal SA's Playford Alive project to Canberra to highlight possible training and employment outcomes that could be achieved by projects such as the proposed West Belconnen development.

[REDACTED] attended a series of meetings with key stakeholders to discuss the experience at Playford and identify opportunities to implement a similar project at West Belconnen. [REDACTED] also presented on the project to a forum of stakeholders including government representatives and representatives of various non-government organisations. The presentation was followed by a discussion of possible opportunities at West Belconnen.

Government agency engagement

Engaging the various governments (ACT, NSW, Commonwealth and Yass Valley Council) is critical in a project such as West Belconnen. Prior to the commencement of stage 1 there had already been engagement with a broad range of Government representatives from the various jurisdictions. These included representatives at officer and executive levels, local members and ministers and their staff.

Once the ACT Government's announcement was made in June 2013 the breadth and depth of engagement was deepened. This ensured that issues were understood, relevant processes were followed and that there is a broad understanding of the project and its vision and objectives. Meetings and workshops with government representatives continue to enable the draft master plan to be refined and the technical studies to be progressed.

Community Newsletters

Newsletters have been an effective mechanism to reach community members, particularly those who do not usually participate in engagement. Four newsletters have been distributed throughout the course of the phase 1 of the project.

The newsletters were distributed to all houses in Holt, Higgins, Macgregor and Dunlop. Additional copies were left at key community access points including Kippax Fair, Kippax and Belconnen libraries, Strathnairn Homestead, the ACT Government shopfront in Belconnen and the LDA shopfront in Dickson. Copies were also mailed to absentee landlords from the area immediately adjacent to the proposed development, and emailed to everyone on the project database.

People and Place Group

The People and Place Group (PPG) was established at the beginning of the consultation process and has met three times throughout phase 1 of the project. The PPG is an effective way to test and refine ideas and incorporate feedback on proposals for the duration of the planning phase. The Group is guided by a terms of reference and is comprised of members who are broadly representative of stakeholder interests.

Child and Youth Engagement

Child and youth engagement was undertaken with students of Kingsford Smith School in Holt, and was run by the school's teaching staff. The activities involved students from all year levels within the school, from kindergarten to year 10, and sought to gain an insight into the views and ideas of the students, and their vision for the area, their community, and the proposed development. Outcomes of the youth engagement activities are detailed in Section 6 below.

West Belconnen project website

The project website www.talkwestbelconnen.com.au has been used to provide up-to-date and accurate information about the project. The website also provides links to past newsletters, videos and Frequently Asked Questions. The project website can be used by stakeholders and the community to access the latest information about the project and help to answer or clarify questions they may have.

The website was launched to coincide with the ACT Government's announcement of the agreement with Riverview to facilitate the planning and development of West Belconnen in the ACT. The website content was subsequently refreshed with additional information being added prior to the Planning and Design Forum in November and again in December to coincide with the release of newsletter 2.

There was another significant update to the website in February 2014 and also regular smaller changes made to ensure stakeholders and community are able to access up-to-date information about the project.

Social Media

Social media is an effective way of disseminating information quickly to a large number of people. It can also provide opportunities for engagement and build community relationships. The social media channels launched early in stage 1 continued to be used as a way of disseminating

information quickly to large numbers of people. They were also used to seek feedback on various topics and to advertise engagement events.

The West Belconnen social media sites were established on the following platforms:

Facebook <http://facebook.com/westbelconnen>

Twitter @westbelconnen

Instagram <http://instagram.com/westbelconnen>

Consultation Manager

A record of all stakeholders and interactions with stakeholders is being managed on-line using database software Consultation Manager.

The database, originally established in 2008, is evolving rapidly as new stakeholders and records of interaction are constantly updated. At the end of April 2014 there were over 600 stakeholders in the database.

4.3 Communications

A communication strategy was part of the Stakeholder Consultation Plan. This has helped to ensure that the community and key stakeholders are notified, informed and encouraged to participate. A broad range of channels were utilised to inform the local and wider community of the project and seek their involvement. Communications for the project have included:

- » Access to the latest information through the project website;
- » Interaction with the project team through the West Belconnen social media sites on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram;
- » Three community newsletters distributed to all houses in Dunlop, Holt, Higgins and Macgregor, in November 2013, December 2013, and February 2014;
- » Newspaper advertisements in the Canberra Times, the Chronicle, and the Yass Tribune;
- » Online event advertisements on the ACT Government's Time to Talk website, Eventbrite, ActewAGL/Mix 106.3 Community Switch, and the Belconnen Community Council Calendar;
- » Community emails distributed via the West Belconnen Health Co-op;
- » Flyers distributed through Kippax Uniting Church; and
- » Posters and flyers displayed at local shopping centres, libraries, and other community centres.

5 Planning and Design Forum: Outcomes

A key step in the rezoning process is the development of a master plan underpinned by a range of technical studies. A preliminary draft master plan was developed over a four day period in November 2013, commencing with a Community and Stakeholder Vision Workshop followed by a three day Planning and Design Forum (PDF).

The Community and Stakeholder Vision Workshop was held at the Holt Community Hub on 11 November 2013. This was an interactive session designed to enable interested community members and stakeholder groups to express their concerns, ideas, and visions for the West Belconnen project.

Almost 100 attendees participated in the workshop, including community members and stakeholder groups, as well as members of the project's consultant team. The majority of community participants were residents of the existing West Belconnen community, particularly Holt and Macgregor.

The outcomes of the Community and Stakeholder Vision Workshop became an important input to the PDF that was held over the following three days. The PDF, held at the Sustainability Hub, CIT Bruce on the 12, 13 and 14 November was an interactive series of workshops that combined the skills and experience of decision makers, technical experts and key community representatives to jointly resolve project challenges and explore design options that reflect the West Belconnen sustainability vision and the emerging community values.

The PDF itself was an invitation only event which strove for broad representation of technical experts including Government and community representatives. Throughout the Forum the project team worked with in excess of 100 stakeholders including representatives from the Commonwealth, ACT and NSW Governments, Yass Valley Council, community representatives and landowners to explore development opportunities and progress the planning and design of West Belconnen.

Detailed information on the outcomes of the community and stakeholder vision workshop and the technical sessions of the PDF can be found in the separate *Community and Stakeholder Vision Workshop and Planning and Design Forum Outcomes Report*. These are summarised briefly below.

5.1 Community Vision and Values Workshop

The issues and ideas raised throughout the community workshop, outlined below, were used to inform the technical sessions at the PDF. This was achieved through a feedback session on Day 1 of the PDF, facilitated by [REDACTED] of Elton Consulting, which explored the issues and ideas, and provided an opportunity for the technical team and key stakeholders to reflect on the outcomes of the community session. Moreover, the 'ideas wall' remained on display throughout the entire PDF, and as such it provided a point of reference for the design team to continuously reflect on the issues and ideas raised by the community.

Issues

Throughout the workshop, participants raised a number of key issues for the project team to take into consideration throughout the planning and design process:

- » The ability of existing roads – particularly Southern Cross Drive and Drake Brockman Drive – to cope with **increased traffic**, both during the construction phase and thereafter.
- » Maintenance of the area's natural assets including the **river corridor** and Ginninderra Falls
- » **Ginninderra Falls** and the Murrumbidgee River should be accessible to the public.
- » Concerns expressed regarding **suburban sprawl** and “sterile,” “lego-town” suburbs.
- » The need to provide infrastructure for sustainable **transport** options.
- » Concerns expressed regarding the **social integration** of the new development with the existing West Belconnen community.
- » The provision of local **employment** opportunities.
- » Concerns were expressed that the current **Kippax** centre will be unable to cope with an increase in population.
- » Concerns expressed that existing **schools** will be unable to cope with projected population increases, and the provision of new schools was highlighted as a key issue (including preschools).
- » Concerns expressed that the challenges of developing in a **bushfire** corridor need to be considered, and the need for fire protection was raised as a key issue.

Ideas

As well as highlighting issues of concern, the workshop also provided an opportunity for community members and stakeholder groups to express their ideas and vision for the new community:

River Corridor and Ginninderra Falls

The river corridor and Ginninderra Falls emerged as a key theme in community and stakeholder ideas. These ideas particularly centred on having Ginninderra Falls re-opened for public access, the creation of a national park, and the provision of recreation areas within the river corridor. Other ideas related to the river corridor included the provision of water quality control ponds along drainage lines to protect the Murrumbidgee River, and to ensure that the river corridor is resistant to erosion.

Housing

A number of ideas also emerged related to housing, and particularly the provision of a mix of affordable housing, catering for a diverse range of people and families. Community members also expressed concern regarding suburban sprawl, and emphasised that housing design should be diverse, creative, and attractive. It was also suggested that housing design should ensure strong connectivity between the built environment and the natural environment.

Sustainable Transport

Another key theme to emerge was the provision of infrastructure for sustainable transport, and that public transport should be considered throughout the planning and design process. Numerous ideas with an emphasis on reducing reliance on cars were raised, such as the provision of bus stops with bike lockers, and an extensive cycling and foot path network. It was also suggested that the current design process should consider the potential future development of express bus routes and a light rail corridor.

Community Building and Place Making

The concept of community building and place making was raised as a key idea, including the provision of spaces for shopping, education, leisure, food production, eating, and work. It was suggested that these social spaces should be intergenerational, and enable people with a disability to participate in all aspects of community life. It was suggested that the design should provide for churches and other spaces for worship and spirituality, and should also take indigenous culture and history into consideration.

Sport and Recreation

The provision of community spaces for sport and recreation was also highlighted as an important idea. A number of participants commented that the design should provide sporting and recreation facilities, including walking trails, cycling trails, horse riding trails, dog parks, a public pool, and an extreme sports hub. Other ideas included the provision of open recreational spaces along the river corridor, and wide suburban streets safe for recreational use. A comment was also made that the design needs to engage with the existing golf course.

Resilience, Energy and Water

A significant idea to emerge was the resilience of the development, particularly to the potential challenges of climate change. It was commented that the design should maximise alternative energy generation opportunities, including solar and wind. Suggestions were made that the landfill site and power line easements provide opportunities for solar energy generation, and that housing designs could incorporate compulsory solar panels.

Water reuse was another key idea, with some stakeholders suggesting that the design should consider the reuse of stormwater and recycled effluent for irrigation, and the use of recycled water in homes. Green waste collection and reuse was also suggested.

Urban Agriculture

The provision of facilities for community agriculture, community gardens, and urban food production on a commercial scale was a key idea. It was also commented that the landfill site and power line easements provide opportunities for food production.

Name

Lastly, the idea of a new name for the development was raised as an important idea. Community members requested an inspirational and attractive name. It was also commented that the name should be distinctive, and reflect the grandeur of the site.

West Belconnen BIG IDEA

Construction

- » Restrict hours of construction traffic
- » Divert trucks around suburbs

Sustainability

- » Solar panels
- » Water tanks
- » Green waste collection and reuse
- » Waste/storm water capture and reuse (recycled water)
- » Adaptive living to climate change

Housing

- » Housing that incorporates sustainable principles (solar power)
- » A range of affordable housing types
- » Diversity of housing that caters for a range of people and families (including students, elderly and disabilities)
- » More density
- » Good design (not a lego town)

An Integrated Community

- » Integrate new and existing community events that bring together young and old
- » Incorporate Aboriginal culture and history
- » Engagement with the golf course

Walkable neighbourhood

- » Safe and wide streets

Work, Live, Play

Complete and integrated transport system

- » Cycle paths
- » Bus
- » Light rail
- » Shared footpaths
- » Bus stops with bike lockers

Supportive road network

- » Express lanes to the city
- » Plan for increase in traffic in and around the development

Community and Placemaking

- » Social infrastructure and services for all ages (intergenerational) and a range of needs:
 - Childcare that reflect the needs of working families
 - Schools
 - Shared spaces for work and play
 - Places of worship
 - Cultural centres
- » Community Garden

Active Healthy Lifestyles and Recreation

- » Walking trails, bike tracks, horse riding and dog walking
- » Extreme sports hub
- » Recreational open spaces and river corridor
- » Dog park
- » Family play and swimming areas
- » Picnic areas
- » Reopen Ginninderra Falls
- » Create a national park
- » A healthy and protected Murrumbidgee River

Governance

- » Resident contribution to the maintenance of shared spaces
- » Community environment trust
- » Opportunity to belong to a co-op

A strong connection between the built and natural environment



5.2 Planning and Design Forum

Day 1: Tuesday 12 November

Some issues and 'Big Ideas' that emerged from the first day of the PDF included:

Sustainable Transport

One theme to emerge was sustainable transport. There was a call for public transport to be considered up front in the planning process. Participants strongly expressed that, for behavioural change to occur, accessible public transport should be provided from the outset. Ensuring dedicated corridors and integrating public transport planning with schools and shops was also considered to be a priority. It was emphasised that West Belconnen should be a 'car optional' development.

Accessibility for large vehicles, including emergency vehicles and buses was flagged as an issue, with West Magregor cited as an example of poor practice. To counter this, some participants expressed that liveability was more important and that streets should be designed for "people not garbage trucks". One specific suggestion was to open the development area up more broadly to NSW, with bridges and a cable car.

Economic/Employment

A further theme to emerge was centred on employment. Several participants expressed the importance of maximising employment for the new and existing community. This was seen to be essential for ensuring economic sustainability. Mixing commercial uses with the environment and conservation was also seen as an opportunity, with the proposition of a city farm that could include compost/commercial prospects.

Housing

Themes to emerge around housing include flexible and innovative housing models to cater for diverse housing requirements. One example offered was that of shared housing. Participants further expressed that housing (and other buildings and infrastructure) should be designed to accommodate generational changes and that design should account for adaptive change.

Water and Energy

The provision of water quality control was considered to be of primary importance. Maximising the use of our own catchment was viewed as key to achieving this. Water recycling also emerged as a key priority, as did the use of renewable energy options such as solar and wind.

Education

Linking education to the environment was a continually emerging theme. This was seen as an opportunity to provide exemplary environmental management and creative conservation that could include an educational element. One idea that was discussed was that of a living River Education Centre. An associated issue was the need to determine what level of access people should have to the river. Another suggestion was made that education and marketing should be utilised to encourage sustainable lifestyles.

Make 'something special' of limitations

The perceived limitations of the site were noted including the landfill and transmission lines but participants recognised the opportunities that could be available. Suggestions for the landfill site include extreme sports, such as BMX riding and a city farm, farmer's market and community

gardens. Ideas for the transmission lines included bike, pedestrian, horse trails linking the river corridor with the landfill site and potential for easements to create both physical and visual barriers between residential areas.

Culture and Place

The importance of creating public spaces to foster a sense of community was noted, with an emphasis on liveability and wellbeing. Participants highlighted the importance of multifunctional spaces in facilitating a shared sense of community. This is particularly important given the objective of creating a mixed and diverse community, emphasising the need for intergenerational spaces. It was also noted that culture and place should extend across both the new community and the existing West Belconnen community, pointing toward the idea of wider West Belconnen community wellbeing. The importance of establishing community places early was noted, and Googong was pointed to as a successful example.

The River Corridor

The opening of the river corridor and Ginninderra Falls to the public was commented on favourably, with participants noting the need to define what level of access the public should have to the corridor. It was also noted that both existing and new community members should have access to the river corridor, enabling the integration of the development with the existing West Belconnen community. A suggestion was made to connect Ginninderra Creek trails to the falls and the Murrumbidgee River. It was commented that the development boundary along the river corridor needs certainty, and needs to enable the access and egress of emergency vehicles in the case of bushfire. A call was made for the establishment of a large National Park, extending to the North and West. A suggestion was also made that urban quality control ponds should be included in the design, to protect the river and provide amenity.

Bushfire Management

The potential vulnerability of the site to bushfire was emphasised, and it was suggested that the development footprint needs to be balanced with bushfire management considerations. It was highlighted that fire mitigation needs to be a consideration throughout the design process.

Day 2: Wednesday 13 November

Day Two comprised three streams of concurrent technical sessions aimed at translating ideas and expertise from Forum participants into an initial draft master plan. Leaders of each session presented a short power point and shared preliminary ideas for the development of the site as a prelude to a more detailed consideration around key issues.

A range of Government representatives participated in each session to provide input and guidance from a Government perspective. An understanding of current Government policy and practice, and the willingness of Government representatives to work with Forum participants to deliver best practice outcomes was essential to the success of the Forum.

While the technical sessions were taking place, the design team developed the draft master plan, responding in real time to issues and solutions arising from the technical sessions. At the close of day 2, the public was invited to attend a pin up session to view the design team's progress on the draft master plan. The processes and outcomes for each session are detailed in the separate *Community and Stakeholder Vision Workshop and Planning and Design Forum Outcomes Report*. Each of the sessions and the issues they covered are briefly outlined here as follows:

» Session A1: Movement Network and Municipal Services

- > Engineering services master planning for the entire development including ACT and NSW land

- > Develop best practice design standards for services reticulation within the streetscape for this development applicable to both ACT and NSW to support the proposed street typologies
- > Constructability, services material, and governance
- » **Session A2: Sustainable Transport**
 - > Develop an integrated transport plan
 - > Early provision of public transport
 - > Consider whole of life costs of services and infrastructure
 - > Also needs to be a change in the culture of transport
- » **Session A3: Water, Sewerage and Electricity**
 - > A challenge of the project will be to adopt best practice for sewer, water, roads and infrastructure.
 - > In thinking about change, it is important to consider the whole system as a package. It is not about changing the roads and the sewer system; it is about changing the whole thinking and aiming to achieve something different.
 - > West Belconnen is a very different model. This is the first opportunity where we are all in partnership. Usually we inherit a project that has already gone through structure planning and is ready to build, but for West Belconnen, we can actually start from design and get the right implementation.
- » **Session B1: Public Open Space Framework**
 - > There is a need for parks and open spaces to connect with existing open space networks in surrounding suburbs.
 - > There is a need to consider how open spaces will be managed.
 - > The design of parks and open spaces was highlighted as an opportunity for something outstanding, not standard playground equipment but something more adventurous. A number of ideas and opportunities were highlighted.
 - > Opportunities for the incorporation of urban agriculture into open spaces.
- » **Session B2: Waste Water Recycling**
 - > Issues and opportunities surrounding the use of rainwater for hot water supply
 - > The use of harvested and treated stormwater for all non-potable household water demands and potentially for food production/irrigation.
 - > Third pipe network across the project to distribute harvested and treated stormwater.
 - > 100% roof collection and charged downpipes.
- » **Session B3: Opportunities, Constraints, and Big Ideas**
 - > Discuss the sustainability goals that have been established for the project, and innovative approaches to the use of land located within buffers, or adjacent to existing infrastructure
 - > Explore opportunities to create a holistic open space framework and how land affected by existing infrastructure can contribute to this open space network
 - > Opportunities for the landfill site were discussed, including recreation, education, urban agriculture, and solar energy generation
 - > Transmission line easements were identified as an opportunity for linking foot, bike, and horse trails to the river corridor

» **Session C1: West Belconnen – ‘A 21st Century Garden Suburb’**

- > Discuss the sustainability goals that have been established for the project and innovative approaches to housing to achieve these.
- > Review the existing ACT and NSW housing controls and ACT and interstate best practice to ascertain whether any improvements or amendments are desirable to enable delivery of the housing in accordance with the West Belconnen sustainability vision.
- > Issues and opportunities around the following objectives for housing were discussed: to deliver the project vision and meet market demand, to be affordable, to be sustainable, and to be innovative.

» **Session C2 and C3: Community Building, Employment and Place Making**

- > Focus on what social sustainability means and how it can be realised in West Belconnen.
- > Examine demand for community facilities (schools, health facilities, libraries, community centres, etc.) and retail/commercial space.
- > Explore alternative models for the provision and location of retail and community uses (community hubs, town/village centres, etc.), and opportunities to utilise existing features such as cultural and heritage assets.
- > Discuss how all these elements can be integrated in West Belconnen to create vibrant and active centres.

» **Session D: Governance and Stewardship**

- > Draw together outcomes from the previous sessions that may have implications for the community governance.
- > Focus on the possibility of establishing a Not for Profit (NFP) mechanism to deliver environmental management and a range of social enterprises.
- > Discuss possible models that could be applied at West Belconnen, including models nationally and internationally.
- > Examine the opportunities that could be funding through the NFP mechanism.

Day 3 – Thursday 14 November

The core design team continued to develop the draft master plan at a closed session on day 3. The designers worked to ensure that the draft master plan was informed by the discussions held throughout the Forum. These discussions were focused not only on the physical design of the West Belconnen master plan but importantly on how we can create a framework that will support and nurture a cohesive, strong and resilient community.

Using ‘Big Ideas’ collected from the Community and Stakeholder Vision Workshop forum and the technical sessions of the PDF, the designers explored the opportunities to integrate the ‘undevelopable’ portions of the site into a broader open space framework that has potential to create long term community assets with a focus on employment, education, recycling initiatives, recreation and food production.

In light of stakeholder feedback, the design team considered:

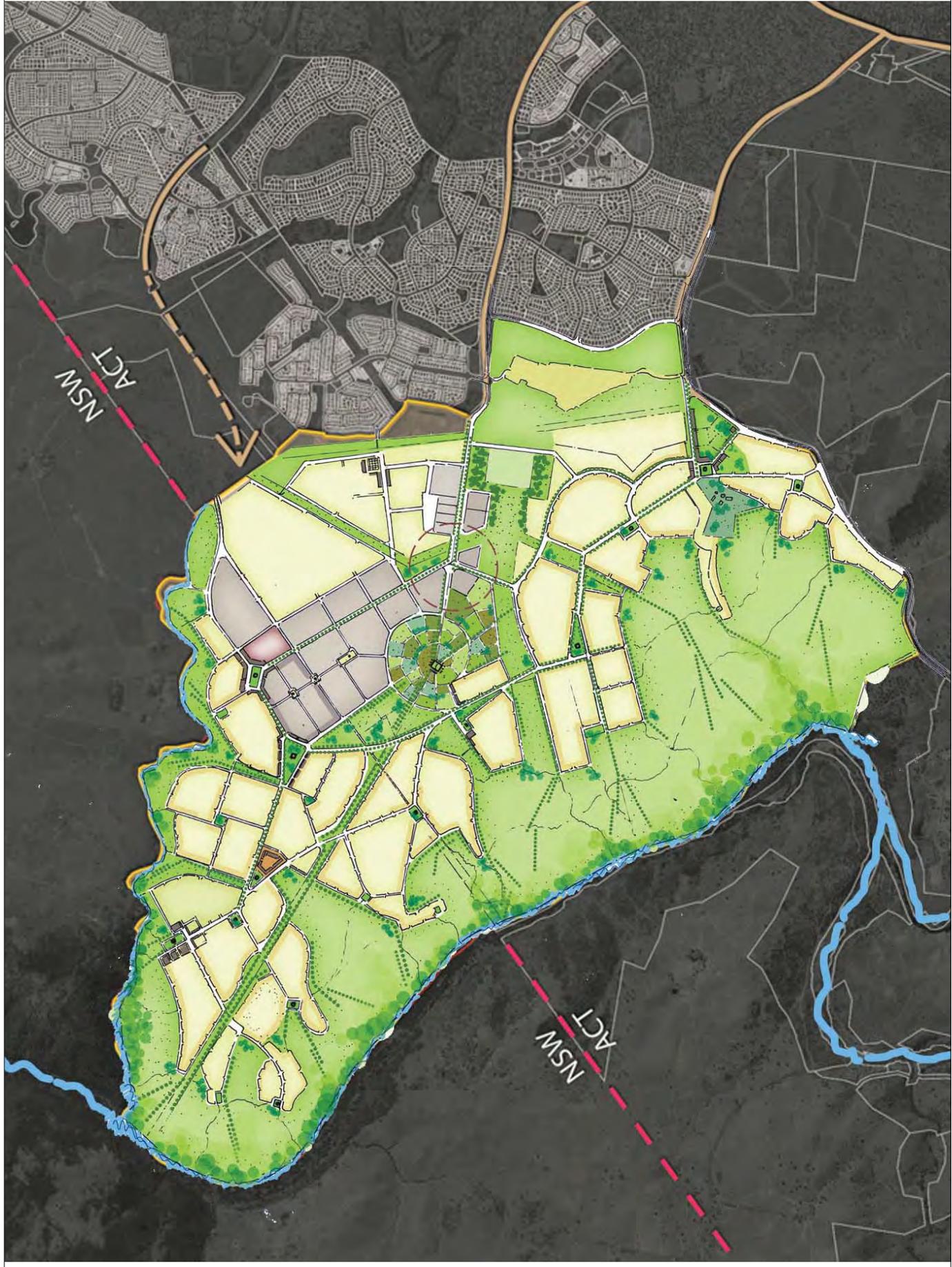
- » Social infrastructure and how well located community facilities can act as a catalyst for social interaction and connection;
- » Providing a diversity of housing to ensure a diverse community that can accommodate a range of residents with different ages, incomes and household size;

- » Creating streets that prioritise pedestrians and cyclists and become safe places for interaction and play, encouraging social exchange between neighbours and reducing social isolation;
- » Designing neighbourhoods that are connected and pedestrian friendly prompting residents to choose to walk rather than drive, resulting in healthier and connected communities; and
- » Local food production and the role community gardens could play in building resilient and healthy communities.

The draft master plan was presented at a final closing session and open house at the conclusion of the day. Approximately 75 people attended the closing session. There were two presentations and then an opportunity for questions and answers. The first presentation by [REDACTED] of RobertsDay provided an overview of the Planning and Design Forum including the key ideas that were generated in each of the sessions on day 2 and the Community and Stakeholder Vision Workshop.

This was followed by a presentation of the preliminary draft master plan by [REDACTED] also from RobertsDay. The presentation demonstrated how key aspects of the master plan had developed to respond to opportunities and constraints on the site. Aspects that were highlighted included the scale of the site, the extensive open space network, the concept of villages that respond to key focal points, how roads were to be developed to facilitate use of public transport and be pedestrian/people friendly, location of schools and retail, and housing mix.

A brief question and answer session followed this presentation. Feedback on the preliminary master plan was positive. A number of participants sought additional information on public transport and road linkages and the proposal by members of the community to create a national park around Ginninderra George.



6 Community Engagement: Outcomes

6.1 Community Liaison

Over the period October to December 2013, the focus of community liaison activities was on deepening and strengthening relationships with key local individuals and organisations. This culminated in the launch in December of the People and Place Group, a key forum for regular dialogue with community representatives. Following personal approaches to identified people, the PPG commenced with the following representation from both ACT-wide and local community levels:

- » Belconnen Community Council
- » Belconnen Community Service
- » Ginninderra Catchment Group
- » Ginninderra Falls Association
- » Kippax Uniting Care
- » Strathnairn Arts Association
- » Hall & District Progress Association (Wallaroo Rd residents)
- » ACT Shelter
- » ACT Council of Social Service
- » Conservation Council

Consultation was also held with local school representatives, local indigenous representatives, churches, local businesses and the Yass Business Chamber with a view to their engagement in the People & Place Group and/or other opportunities from early 2014.

Another key event for community liaison activities was the Planning and Design Forum in November. Personal contact with key local individuals was undertaken to encourage attendance at the opening-night community event, which was assisted by local organisations' willingness to advertise the event (in particular the West Belconnen Health Cooperative which advertised the event to its thousands of members).

Other community liaison activities over the quarter included:

- » Attendance at Poverty Week event at Kippax Uniting Care
- » Participation in Riverview presentation to Yass Valley Council, including seeking advice from Council on opportunities to engage with key community members in the Yass Valley
- » Participation in discussions about bringing community-owned approaches to potential business enterprises in the West Belconnen development, in particular solar farm and urban agriculture

A community liaison perspective was also brought to some key Riverview processes:

- » Contributing to the development of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), ensuring that local community concerns were addressed
- » Assistance with updating Riverview's West Belconnen stakeholder list

The focus of community liaison activities over the period January – June 2014 was again on deepening and strengthening relationships with key local individuals and organisations. This has been achieved particularly through the continuation of the People and Place Group, a key forum for regular dialogue with community representatives. Consultation was also held with local school representatives, local indigenous representatives, churches, and local businesses and groups of local residents such as the residents of the Golf Course estate.

Another key community liaison event during the second stage of community engagement was attendance at the Charnwood Community Carnival—known locally as the 'Charny Carny'. Engagement at the event included a poster display outlining the draft master plan as well as regular announcements about West Belconnen and the Project Office.



Community Liaison Officer [redacted] with Charny Carny coordinator [redacted] and Applesauce the Pig (Charny Carny mascot)

6.2 Community Information and Feedback Sessions

The Community Information and Feedback Sessions (CIFS), held at Kippax Fair on 20 and 22 February 2014, were an important source of community feedback on the draft master plan. Community members were invited to view information about the plan and were able to interact directly with key members of the project team who were present at each session.

Both sessions saw high attendance, and a high level of interest in the project. Approximately 250 people stopped to look at the display and engage with the project team at the first session, and approximately 300 at the second. The community were able to provide feedback both verbally, through these interactions, and in writing, through the use of feedback forms.

Responses were mostly positive, with most attendees expressing an interest in the project and wanting to find out more information about the draft master plan. Some concerns were also expressed, particularly around roads and traffic, environmental issues and potential impacts on the existing residents and services of West Belconnen.

The following details the feedback provided by attendees, and highlights the issues that were of interest and concern.

Recreational facilities

- » Some attendees were particularly interested in horse trails and equestrian facilities, while others were more interested in cycling paths or pedestrian access
- » Some concerns were expressed about what will happen to existing recreational facilities in the area, particularly equestrian facilities and the golf course
- » Having access to the river was seen as a positive aspect of the development
- » Many attendees were interested in accessibility to green areas that will be established for residents and other visitors
- » Ginninderra Falls and its possible re-opening generated high interest; people want to see it re-opened with safety provisions and as a place for all to enjoy. One attendee commented: *“This can be a real benefit to the whole of Canberra”*



Land uses, rezoning and cross-border issues

- » Many attendees asked about the proposed land uses of the site
- » Significant interest focussed on the proposed retail and employment centre e.g. how large it would be, where it would be situated; some attendees wanted more detail of this in the draft master plan map
- » Several attendees sought clarification regarding roles and responsibilities of Riverview and the ACT Government and the level of collaboration

- » Many attendees showed an interest in how differences in planning and tenure systems between the ACT and NSW would be managed, as well as the provision of services cross-border
- » *"My major concern is the imbalances between freehold and leasehold land between borders; what can be done on one property could be different on another"*

Roads and traffic

- » Many attendees asked about existing arterial roads and their potential links, upgrades and extension
- » Existing traffic bottlenecks were mentioned, with concern these might worsen with new development
- » *"Southern Cross Drive intersections are already too busy and dangerous!"*
- » Several discussions centred around specific roads (particularly Ginninderra Drive, Southern Cross Drive, Spofforth Street) and the best plans to improve traffic
- » *"Cars are backed up even now during peak hours; we struggle to get out of our driveway"*
- » The potential to extend Ginninderra Drive was commented on favourably by a number of attendees
- » Opposition to speed humps in existing suburbs (namely those along Spofforth Street, Holt) expressed by several attendees; although some supported speed humps and controls for high speeds currently occurring in some streets

Public Transport

- » Several discussions around public transport occurred during the session
- » The prospect of light rail as a form of public transport was raised by several attendees
- » Others were particularly interested in bus services, and whether they would be extended with frequency increased
- » The potential for a public transport corridor into the development was highlighted in discussions about traffic and road planning

Environmental Issues

- » Sustainability initiatives and the provision of wildlife habitat were commented on favourably
- » The proximity of the Murrumbidgee River generated high interest. *"It will be really exciting if done in a way that preserves the ecology of the Murrumbidgee River"*
- » Questions about the river concerned access across the river, potential flooding, drainage, and the impact on the downstream Murrumbidgee.
- » One attendee was concerned about the perceived lack of consultation with downstream landholders, and whether the potential environmental impacts had been thoroughly investigated.
- » Some attendees expressed concern about how the existing tip site will be managed. *"What are you going to do with the asbestos in the tip? It's too dangerous to have people living on it or even playing on it, and capping won't be effective in torrential rain"*
- » Some attendees were also concerned about the power lines within the development site, asking the project team how this will be managed

Housing type and affordability

- » Many attendees asked about the size of housing blocks, density and types of housing planned
- » Concerns were expressed about *"big houses on small blocks"*, and that all houses will look the same
- » Some attendees asked about the prices of blocks
- » Considerations for first home buyers, affordability and social/public housing were queried by some attendees
- » Some attendees commented that there should be a range of affordable housing options provided. *"Will there be real affordable housing? Or is it all public housing?"*
- » *"Public housing please!"; "Please include land rent!"*

Retail and Services

- » Many attendees asked whether there will be more schools to cater for a growing population
- » Many attendees enquired about what new services and facilities were planned (particularly shops, health centres, library etc.); the potential for more businesses was seen as positive
- » One attendee was concerned about the need for additional emergency services stations and crew
- » The provision of aged care facilities and retirement living was highlighted by some
- » One attendee was concerned about limited space: *"If you can't get a garbage truck or fire truck in there, I wouldn't want to live there"*
- » The future of existing retail and service facilities was of concern to some attendees, particularly Strathnairn, the golf course, nursery and vet
- » Some attendees were particularly interested in Kippax and its future (specific comments on the Kippax Group Centre are detailed in a separate report)

General responses to the draft Master Plan

- » Many attendees were interested in the timeline of the project, asking about the approval, planning and development processes. *"Is this just a proposal? When will it all happen?"*
- » Some attendees wanted more information about when land would be released for sale
- » Concern was expressed about the development of open space and impact on views currently enjoyed by residents.
- » Several respondents expressed interest or concern about the presence of the Parkwood Eggs within the proposed development site. One attendee said it needed to be *"cleaned up"*, and others expressed concern about the odour from the facility
- » Distance from the rest of Canberra was raised by a number of attendees. While for some West Belconnen was seen as *"still close to the city"*, others were against new suburbs and expansion *"this far out"*
- » A number of attendees requested a name other than West Belconnen
- » Responses to the plan were generally positive, although some scepticism was expressed about the reality when put into practice: *"I hope it goes ahead according to the plans you have"*
- » *"Potentially for West Belconnen this is a very good plan, and I like the community feedback aspect. It's a sensibly-based proposal, a good mix of infill with local vegetation. Traffic flows and public transport are major concerns, but overall I'm very impressed"*



6.3 Website and Social Media

The project website and social media sites have provided effective methods of disseminating up-to-date information, as well as engaging broadly with the community. Facebook and Twitter in particular have provided useful platforms for seeking feedback from the community, as well as allowing community members to raise their ideas, issues, and concerns.

At the end of April 2014 the West Belconnen Facebook site had 226 'likes' and the West Belconnen Twitter site had 152 followers. The sites have been used to share ideas raised throughout the planning process in order to elicit community feedback. The establishment of a 'Tell us what you think' Facebook survey group has provided another avenue for community members to share their opinions.

Specific issues raised on social media have included the ability of existing roads to cope with increased traffic, the potential impacts on the existing horse paddocks and equestrian community, and the protection of native wildlife. Ideas raised have included public transport links from West Belconnen to Belconnen and Civic town centres, and the provision of a variety of block sizes. In addition, the potential provision for recreational access to the Murrumbidgee River and Ginninderra Falls was commented on favourably.

6.4 Project Office

The Project Office was opened in mid-February at the Kippax Centre. The Project Office features a large-scale 3D model of the proposed West Belconnen site along with story boards providing

information about the project and the draft Master Plan. Since opening in February, over 600 community members have visited the Project Office. Comments and concerns raised by community members have been recorded and uploaded onto the Consultation Manager database.

The majority of visitors to the Project Office have expressed an interest in the project, and sought to find out more information. Issues that have been raised primarily reflect concerns about how the proposed development may affect the existing West Belconnen community. In particular, the ability of existing roads to cope with increased traffic has been a key concern. Other specific comments include a request for diverse and affordable housing, a request for improved mobile service coverage, and concerns that any development may affect the existing equestrian community and native wildlife.

More generally, the Project Office has provided an important point of access for community members to find out more about the project by engaging with the displays, engaging directly with members of the project team, and asking questions about the project.



West Belconnen Project Office

6.5 People and Places Group meetings

Three meetings of the People and Place Group have been held throughout phase 1 of the project. The first meeting in December 2013 introduced the PPG, outlined the West Belconnen project, and provided an overview of the preliminary draft master plan. This was followed by questions, discussion, and the identification of issues for future meetings.

The second meeting in February 2014 involved a discussion on the engagement process and ways to increase engagement with hard to reach groups particularly young people. It also included a discussion on housing and demographics. These discussions were led by group members with all members participating freely.

The third meeting was held in March 2014 and included a detailed discussion on the revised master plan and discussions on community and public transport options and the science related to development near power lines and tips.

Further detail on the PPG meetings along with meeting minutes are provided in separate reports.

6.6 West Belconnen Training and Employment Initiative

Drawing upon the success and learnings of the Playford Alive project run by Renewal SA the concept of the West Belconnen Project including a training and employment initiative was canvassed with a broad range of stakeholders over a two day period in early February. The two day visit of ██████████ commenced with a very successful presentation and discussion involving a range of representatives from Commonwealth and ACT Government agencies and non-government organisations such as UnitingCare Kippax and ACT Shelter. Participants at this event were highly supportive of adopting a similar concept at West Belconnen.

Following this a range of meetings were held with key stakeholders from across industry and government. All participants saw merit in adopting a similar approach as that used at Playford with many providing advice on how to tailor a training and employment project to the ACT context.

6.7 Child and Youth Engagement

Child and youth engagement was undertaken with students of Kingsford Smith School in Holt, and was run by the school's teaching staff. The activities involved students from all year levels within the school, from kindergarten to year 10, and sought to gain an insight into the views and ideas of the students, and their vision for the area, their community, and the proposed development. A presentation was given at school assemblies for both junior and senior students to provide an introduction to both the West Belconnen project and the Kippax Group Centre planning review. It was emphasised that the process is about participation and involvement, rather than decision-making.

The school's younger students (Kindergarten and years 1 and 2) were given an explanation of the project and taken on a walking tour of the Kippax Centre. The students were invited to imagine how a new community might look, and to think about the issues and ideas they thought were important and should be taken into consideration. Students then drew their vision and ideas.

The school's older students (years 3-10) took part in focus groups, where they were again asked to think about their vision and ideas for their community into the future. Group representation took into account gender, age, culture, personality, and interests. These focus groups produced a number of key ideas, which were then subjected to a 'hot dot' process. Within this process, each student was allocated a dot which they could 'spend' on the idea that most interested them.

Community spaces

The provision of community spaces emerged as a key priority for many students. For the students, community spaces were important meeting places for the community to come together. Students emphasised that community spaces should be accessible and age-inclusive, catering for a wide range of ages, from young children and teens through to seniors. Specific ideas included cafes, parks, and playgrounds.

Community facilities were also found to be important, with popular ideas including a community centre for all ages, an arts centre, and a bigger library.



Recreation facilities

Recreation facilities were also a key priority, with specific ideas including an aquatic centre, an indoor sports complex, a skate park, and additional sports fields. Again students tended to emphasise the importance of such facilities as places for the community to come together.

Retail

A number of the students' ideas suggested that they would like to see a greater variety of retail options in the area. Specific ideas included a variety department store, more food options, and a movie theatre.

Environment and Design

A significant idea to emerge from the focus groups and 'hot dot' exercise was that any development should be safe for animals. Natural features such as trees and flowers also featured prominently in students' drawings, suggesting that a strong connection to the natural environment is important. Alternative energy options such as solar panels were also shown in some drawings.

Transport and traffic

Also emerging as key ideas from the focus groups and 'hot dot' exercise were the provision of safe roads and crossings and good public transport. Students discussed ideas around alternative forms of public transport, and light rail was raised as an option. The prominence of these ideas suggests that safe and inclusive community mobility and access is a priority for students.

Connectivity

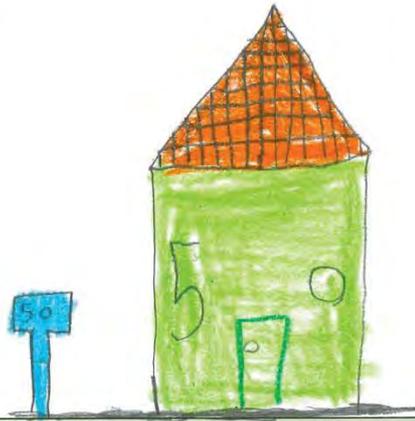
The provision of good connectivity for technology services was also highlighted as a priority.

WEST BELCONNEN DEVELOPMENT

Some houses that spins
play grounds.
doctors.
sola panels.
shops.

Bus stops,
a pool that people to share,
jumping castles.
library.

Vets.
Water tanks.



7 Concurrent Engagement

7.1 Kippax Group Centre Planning Review

The engagement activities outlined within this report have been undertaken simultaneously with those related to the Kippax Group Centre Planning Review. Riverview, on behalf of the ACT Government, is undertaking a Planning Review into the Kippax Group Centre in order to examine issues, opportunities and constraints at the Centre, with a view to identifying options for accommodating further growth and revitalising the Centre.

The scope of the review includes an assessment of the following planning issues:

- » Public transport, traffic and parking
- » Recreational and community facilities
- » The Centre's connectivity to and from the surrounding residential areas
- » Opportunities for future development, informed by an assessment of the commercial potential of the centre

As these projects are closely related, the Kippax Group Centre Planning Review engagement activities provided further opportunities to engage with the community and key stakeholders regarding the wider West Belconnen project.

Detailed information regarding the engagement activities and outcomes of the Kippax Group Centre Planning Review is provided in a separate report.

8 Next Steps

The proposed rezoning of the West Belconnen site will involve changes to the planning controls that currently apply over the site, on both sides of the border. This means a change to the types of development permissible. Should the outcome of the planning process be positive, amendments will be made to the National Capital Plan, the Territory Plan and the Yass Valley Planning Scheme to enable the project to proceed. Each of these amendments is a separate formal process and will require community consultation.

An approximate 18 month timeframe is estimated from the lodgement of the documentation associated with the rezoning through to the announcement of the decision on the rezoning applications.

A strategic communications and engagement strategy will be developed to guide the consultation during phase 2 – statutory planning. This strategy will wrap around the ACT and NSW rezoning process and also include non-statutory consultation. It is anticipated that many of the techniques employed during phase 1 will be utilised in phase 2.



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West Belconnen Community Plan

Part 1 - Background Report

Client:

Riverview and the Land Development Agency

Date:

5 May 2014

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Disclaimer:

The development parameters, (dwelling numbers, stages etc.) referred to in this report may vary over time. The figures contained herein are estimates; they represent a good approximation of likely development outcomes to a sufficient level of accuracy for the purposes of this report.

Prepared by

Reviewed by

Date 15 April 2014

Document name West Belconnen Comprehensive Community Plan Part 1

Version 6

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1 Introduction

This report presents a Community Plan for the new suburb(s) of West Belconnen, to be developed within the north western part of the ACT and extending into the southern part of the Shire of Yass, in NSW. It has been prepared by social planning consultants Elton Consulting, on behalf of the project's proponents, the Riverview Projects (ACT) Pty Ltd (Riverview) and the ACT Land Development Agency (LDA). The Community Plan has been prepared to support and inform the master plan for West Belconnen, the rezoning of the site and subsequent development applications.

The scope of the Community Plan includes:

- » Population forecasts for West Belconnen
- » Analysis of housing needs and strategies for housing mix, affordable housing, adaptable housing
- » Assessment of needs for community, education and recreation facilities and services
- » The strategies required to address those needs, including funding, implementation and delivery, management and on-going planning processes
- » Commitments for community building and place making initiatives and arrangements for implementation
- » Other measures to create a socially sustainable community at West Belconnen.

It is important to note that both open space and demographics are being dealt with by other consultancies with the outcomes of the work detailed in separate reports. Preparation of the West Belconnen Community Plan has involved:

- » A review of background studies and planning policies
- » Analysis of housing and demographic data
- » An assessment of existing community facilities in the surrounding area and their capacity to meet the needs of the future West Belconnen population
- » Consultation with staff from relevant ACT agencies to consider needs and strategies for social infrastructure provision
- » Input from the Planning and Design Forum and other workshops to inform elements of the Master Plan
- » Discussions with LDA and Riverview regarding commitments and implementation strategy.

The Community Plan is presented in four parts with this Background Report being the first. The second part focuses on social sustainability, the third on housing and social infrastructure requirements and the fourth provides an overview of housing.

This Background Report provides:

- » An introduction to the project including vision, principles and objectives
- » An overview of the relevant policy context including mostly ACT but also relevant NSW policy
- » An analysis of existing conditions including current demographics and existing social infrastructure
- » An overview of future conditions.

2 West Belconnen – the project

2.1 The development site

The West Belconnen development site is located in the north west of the ACT and straddles the NSW border. The majority of the site falls within the ACT with the northern portion located in the Yass Local Government Area, in NSW. The site is near the new suburb of Holt and West Macgregor and is bordered by the Magpies Belconnen Golf Club to the east, Ginninderra Creek to the north and the Murrumbidgee River to the south-west.

The development site in NSW is a 'peninsula' bounded by the Murrumbidgee River and Ginninderra Creek and is only accessible from the ACT. The entire site has direct access to the existing ACT road network via the distributor roads of Parkwood Road/Southern Cross Drive and Stockdill Drive/Drake Brockman Drive. The site is approximately 20 minutes from the centre of Canberra and 12 minutes from Belconnen. The town of Yass is the closest major NSW settlement and is approximately 50 minutes travel by car to the north of the site, with the only access via the ACT road network.

The ACT site includes all of Blocks 1605 and 1606 Belconnen District. The ACT Blocks, Lots 1605 and 1606, are currently held by Corkhill entities as a rural lease. The Corkhill Group through entity Reid & Stevens P/L also owns NSW Blocks Lots 1, 2, 3 & 7 which are adjacent to the rural lease land. Immediately to the north of the site, across Parkwood Road, is an area of territory land which is largely unleased and undeveloped but has possible urban potential and has been identified as such in the ACT Planning Strategy. This land is bounded by Parkwood Road, West Macgregor, Ginninderra Creek and the Parkwood Egg farm. Four additional blocks in the NSW peninsula are also including in the master plan area. These blocks are freehold with different owners.

The West Belconnen site is close to a range of social facilities and commercial centres in Macgregor, Holt and Belconnen. It is 2-3 kms from the Holt local centre and the Kippax group centre which offer access to daily needs. It is approximately 7km from the Belconnen town centre which accommodates government departments, a community centre, a Westfield shopping centre and an arts centre.

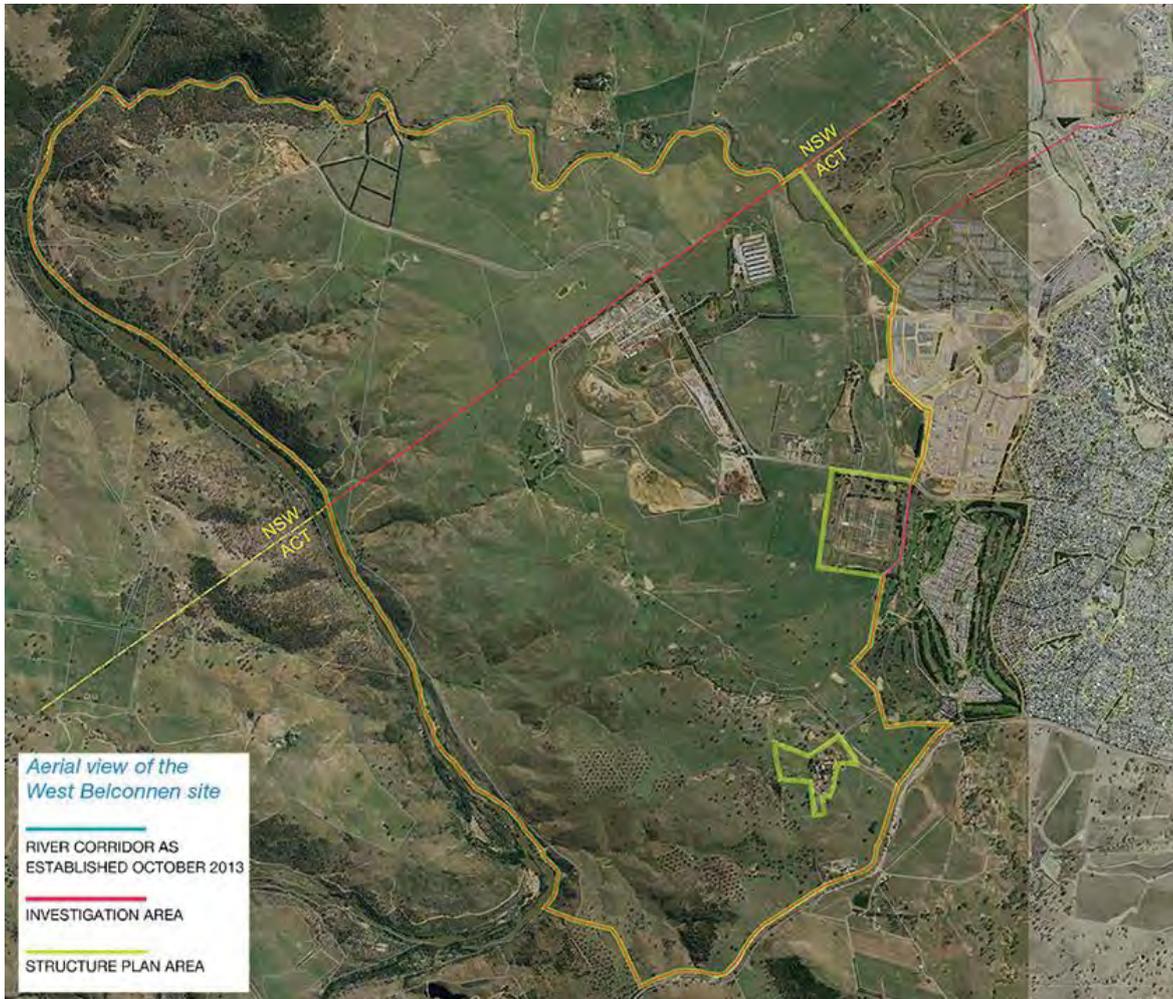
The site is close to education facilities in Holt, Macgregor, Latham and Charnwood including the Kingsford Smith School in Holt which offers preschool to Year 10. It is also close to the library at Kippax and emergency services, including a fire and ambulance station at Charnwood, and police at Belconnen town centre, and Calvary Hospital at Bruce.

The rezoning in both the ACT and NSW will allow a high quality residential precinct that provides for around 11,500 dwellings (approximately 6,500 of which will be in the ACT) housing around 30,000 people¹ over a 30 year period. It will accommodate a mix of lots to provide for a range of housing types and densities. This will allow a greater variety of affordable housing in the overall development while minimising the impact on commercial outcomes.

¹ The development parameters, (dwelling numbers, stages etc.) referred to in this report may vary over time. The figures contained herein are estimates; they represent a good approximation of likely development outcomes to a sufficient level of accuracy for the purposes of this report.

The master plan will incorporate an efficient subdivision pattern which will minimise space utilised by roads in order to maximise the available land. The urban pattern will be designed to allow for connections and links to existing physical infrastructure, services and social infrastructure facilities located in the adjacent suburbs. This design will extend the lifespan of these facilities and contribute to an integrated community.

A site and context map for West Belconnen is below .Study area map



2.2 Project vision

A variety of initiatives are proposed to help build a diverse and cohesive community at West Belconnen. These include:

- » Incorporating a variety of housing types in the master plan to ensure diversity
- » Providing a variety of block sizes and density in house and land packages to improve housing affordability and exceed the ACT Governments 20% target for affordable housing
- » Establishing adaptable housing to allow residents to age in place as their lifestyles change
- » Incorporating an accessible and user friendly open space network into the development to enhance community interaction and liveability
- » Provision of public transport for new residents in the earliest stages of the development to embed use of public transport into residents travel behaviour
- » Providing community facilities and services, located close to public transport and in an area where people are likely to congregate to create a sense of place and enhance community wellbeing
- » Establishing a residents' welcome program highlighting the sustainability and environmental initiatives provided in the development and how to make best use of these
- » Providing public open space throughout the development and retaining natural open space
- » Ensuring the Murrumbidgee River Corridor zone is recognised and maintained as a major conservation and recreation area. It will be restored and managed with an emphasis on its conservation values, protecting important ecological and heritage features
- » Ensuring the Ginninderra Creek corridor is rehabilitated and conserved as a riparian corridor, building on the series of creek restoration projects that have been undertaken in the ACT in recent years. This will contribute to completion of the restoration for the entire length of the creek from Gungahlin to its confluence with the Murrumbidgee River
- » Establishing a network of vegetated creek line corridors linking the Murrumbidgee River and Ginninderra Creek with the surrounding landscape. The network will be designed to allow the movement of fauna throughout the development and broader landscape
- » Introducing conservation areas to protect important ecological features, particularly habitat for the threatened Pink-tailed Worm-lizard (*Aprasia parapulchella*) and Yellow Box Red Gum grassy woodland
- » Establishing a network of path and cycle ways to allow for passive recreation and transit throughout the development. This will help to reduce vehicle trips and provide opportunities for health and fitness
- » Creating opportunities for both passive and active recreational pursuits and necessary infrastructure. Locations for these activities will not compromise ecological objectives for the open space network
- » Creating opportunities to include educational experiences associated with the Indigenous and European history and natural history of the site
- » Implementing an integrated monitoring, reporting and evaluation program to document and validate all steps in the process. This means lessons learnt can be used to inform the development strategy, sales and marketing and future projects.

2.3 Guiding principles

Riverview has adopted a statement of guiding principles for sustainable results as the project objectives. The guiding principles are also recognised in the Heads of Agreement with the ACT Government where they have been adopted as the project objects and will guide decision making and for the planning and delivery stages and beyond. The guiding principles reflect national priorities and align with federal, state and territory government policies on housing affordability, climate change and environmental protection.

The West Belconnen Project will:

- » Be sustainable over time, socially, economically and ecologically (with a low and reducing ecological footprint)
- » Respond to the local and global environment
- » Provide for future beneficial change to occur in design, infrastructure and regulatory mechanisms
- » Be cost effective, replicable and measurable
- » Act as a new model that others can follow.

2.4 Social objectives

Social objectives for West Belconnen, detailed in the statement of guiding principles, include:

- » Respecting and honouring Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural, historical and spiritual values, including integrating with the existing rich, social fabric of Belconnen
- » Designing for social equity, affordability, diversity and interdependence, honouring differences and catering for the needs of individuals through all stages of life
- » Maximising health, safety and comfort of the built environment to provide enduring quality of life
- » Instilling awareness and supporting education of sustainability values, technology and lifestyles
- » Using creative and robust design solutions to create a continuing sense of place and beauty that inspires, affirms and ennobles
- » Designing neighbourhoods that support and encourage community interactions through imaginative, functional and enjoyable public spaces

3 Policy Context

3.1 Overview

The purpose of this review is to ensure the West Belconnen project responds to the local strategic context and policy direction of both the ACT and NSW governments.

3.2 Territory Plan (2013)

Strategic directions

The Territory Plan is the key statutory planning document in the ACT, providing the policy framework for the administration of planning in the ACT. The purpose of the Territory Plan is to manage land use change and development in a manner consistent with strategic directions set by the ACT Government, Legislative Assembly and the community.

The object of the Territory Plan is to ensure, in a manner not inconsistent with the National Capital Plan, the planning and development of the ACT to provide the people of the ACT with an attractive, safe and efficient environment in which to live, work and have their recreation.

Key **social sustainability principles** contained in the Territory Plans Statement of Strategic Direction (2010) of relevance for the West Belconnen project are:

- » 1.18 Provision will be made for a comprehensive range of readily accessible community, cultural, sporting and recreational facilities, distributed according to the varying needs of different localities and population groups. In major centres and developing areas, sites will be safeguarded where necessary for particular community needs.
- » 1.19 A variety of open space types will be provided in each district or local area to meet the diverse recreational needs of residents and visitors, and to contribute to community health.
- » 1.20 Planning policies for community facilities and open space will encourage multiple use and flexible design to allow for changing needs.
- » 1.21 Provision of affordable, adaptable and special needs housing will be promoted throughout the city, as well as modification or redevelopment of existing housing stock to meet emerging social needs.
- » 1.22 Urban development will be planned in a manner that promotes community vitality and safety, applying principles of crime prevention through environmental design. Provision will also be made for emergency services infrastructure necessary to ensure a high standard of safety for residents and visitors.
- » 1.23 The needs of people with disabilities will be recognised in all facets of urban planning, particularly including the design and operation of transport and access systems and the assessment of development proposals.
- » 1.24 New suburban areas will be planned with a legible and permeable hierarchy of roads; conveniently located commercial and community facilities; a network of open spaces; an off-road system for pedestrians and cyclists; and provision for accessible public transport.

- » 1.25 **Heritage and cultural values will be safeguarded**, including in particular those of the Territory's Aboriginal peoples and those derived from both its rural history and urban development as the National Capital. The distinctive qualities of residential areas and other places, as well as elements of community heritage, will also be recognised and their conservation promoted.
- » 1.26 **Identified places of heritage significance will be protected** in accordance with requirements for their conservation contained in the Heritage Register and any relevant heritage guidelines under the *Heritage Act 2004*. Special provisions are included in the Heritage Act for the recognition, registration and conservation of Aboriginal heritage.

Key **spatial planning and urban design principles** for West Belconnen include:

- » 2.7 **Development will be planned to encourage use of public transport, walking and cycling, including commuter cycling.** Routes will be preserved for an enhanced inter-town public transport system. Requirements for vehicle parking will be related to commercial needs and transport policy objectives.
- » 2.10 **Adequate provision of open space throughout the Territory will remain a high priority.** Open space will be planned and carefully maintained as an integrated, hierarchical system that provides for a diversity of sport and recreation activities, contributes to the legibility and character of urban development, is cost-effective to maintain, and assists in the effective management of stormwater.
- » 2.12 Planning for non-urban and natural areas will also **recognise the values of land for research, education, recreation and tourism purposes.**
- » 2.14 Policies and procedures to **promote high quality, creative design of development, urban spaces and landscape settings** will be applied throughout the Territory, and innovation encouraged, in keeping with the spirit of the National Capital as an exemplar of best practice. Particular care will be taken to ensure high-amenity, quality design outcomes within residential areas, heritage areas, major centres and activity nodes, and along principal approach routes. **The relationship between the public and private realms will also be emphasised in terms of the design quality of precincts and shared spaces**, including spaces around buildings, as well as that of individual developments.
- » 2.16 **Retention of Canberra's unique landscape setting, including the integration of natural and cultural elements that create its 'garden city' and 'bush capital' qualities, will be accorded the highest priority.** Special attention will be given to safeguarding visual amenity, protecting vegetation and other important features within the established urban landscape, and ensuring the high quality of environmental design in new developments or redevelopment.

Community facilities in Residential Zones

The Territory Plan contains a range of zones and precincts. The development of community facilities primarily occurs in the Community Facility Zone however the Residential Zones (RZ1-RZ5) also provide opportunities for "a limited range of small scale facilities to meet local needs consistent with residential amenity."

Community Facility Zone

The Territory Plan contains a Community Facility Zone (CFZ) with the following objectives:

- » a) To facilitate social sustainability and inclusion through providing **accessible sites for key government and non-government facilities and services for individuals, families, and communities.**
- » b) To provide **accessible sites for civic life and allow community organisations to meet the needs of the Territory's various forms of community.**

- » c) To protect these social and community uses from competition from other uses.
- » d) To enable the efficient use of land through facilitating the co-location, and multi-use of community facilities, generally near public transport routes and convenience services appropriate to the use.
- » e) To encourage adaptable and affordable housing for persons in need of residential support or care.

The Community Facility Zone Development Code applies to all development in the community facility zone. This code provides additional planning, design and environmental controls to support the objectives of the community facility zone. It is used by the Authority to assess development applications and offers guidance to intending applicants in designing development proposals and preparing development applications.

Community and Recreation Facilities Location Guidelines General Code

The general code covers facilities used for community purposes which need public access, namely:

- » Education
- » Health
- » Community services
- » Arts
- » Sport and recreation.

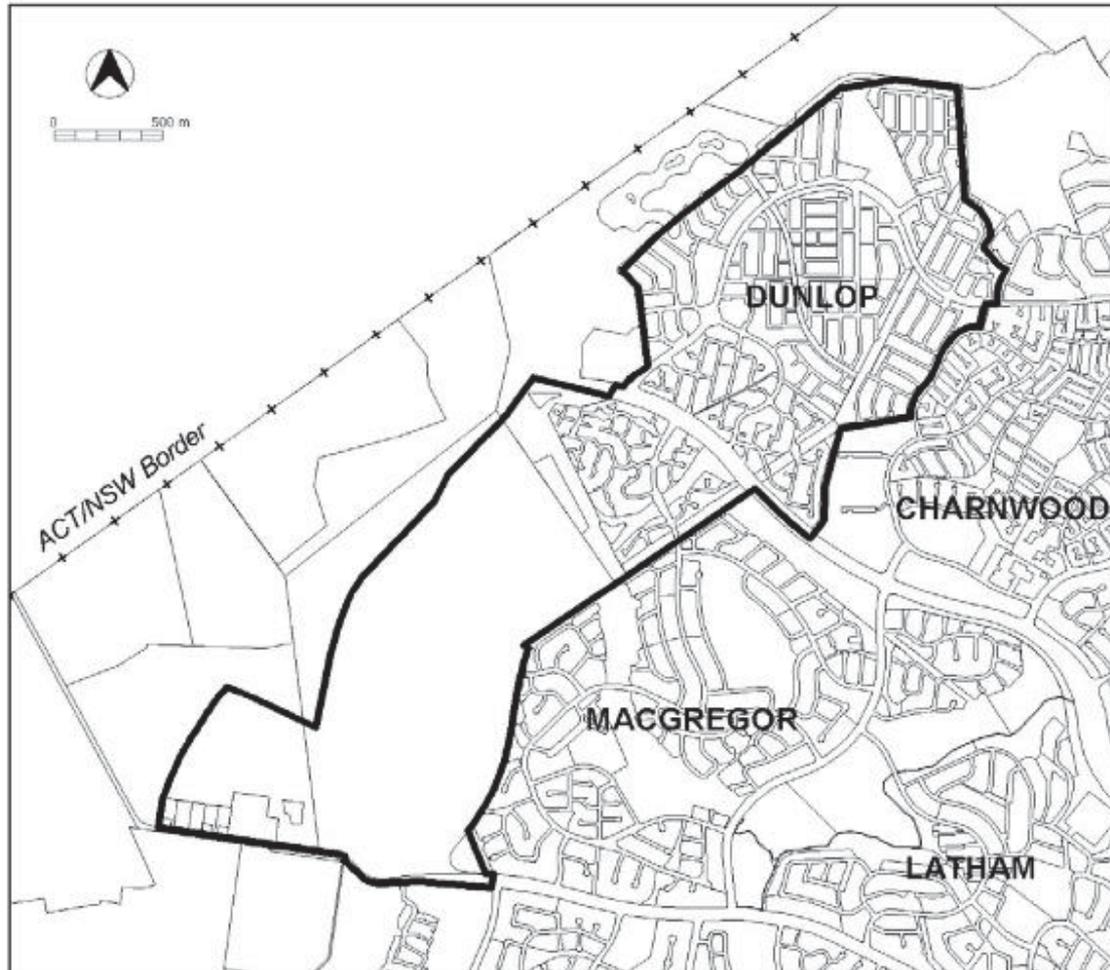
The general location guidelines cover:

- » **Public transport** – aiming for locations within 500 metres of bus stops except where the facilities are likely to be used by small children, older people or people with a disability where the distance is reduced
- » **Parks** – aim for all residential areas to be within 400 metres of local parks with playground facilities
- » **Retail facilities** – community facilities generally should be located near retail centres in a position that is relatively central to their long term catchment
- » **Co-location/mixed use** – compatible facilities should be clustered at every opportunity and facilities shared wherever possible. Flexible design is encouraged
- » **Separation** – facilities likely to generate noise (clubs, outdoor recreation) should be located so that they do not reduce residential amenity, nor constrain later residential development
- » **Access and mobility** – reference should be made to Australian standards for access and mobility to ensure community and recreation facilities are accessible to older people and people with disabilities. Community and recreation sites should be as flat as possible
- » **Parking** – parking for older people and people with disabilities should be provided close to entrances of public buildings; parking should be safe and well lit after dark
- » **Pedestrian access** – safe access for pedestrians is key. Consideration should be given to the nature and traffic volume of nearby roads and distances, and safe access, to public transport
- » **Lighting/surveillance** – all facilities to be used at night should be well lit including parking areas and pedestrian routes. Landscaping should consider surveillance
- » **Design and siting** in residential areas – all community facilities located in residential areas should comply with the Residential Development Code where applicable.

The code also includes detailed guidelines for specific facilities.

West Belconnen Structure Plan (ACTPLA)

Figure 1 Area subject to the Structure Plan



An earlier West Belconnen Structure Plan was prepared to facilitate the development of Dunlop and West MacGregor. It covers only a small portion of the West Belconnen project area and will be superseded by a new structure plan. Reference to the earlier plan is included here for completeness.

The earlier structure plan outlines a series of planning objectives and principles for the development of West Belconnen to achieve high levels of amenity, safety and cost effectiveness. The most relevant planning objectives relating to social sustainability are identified in the following table.

Table 1 Relevant objectives and principles, West Belconnen Structure Plan

| Area | Objectives |
|---|--|
| 2.2 Urban structure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To set down a legible hierarchy of urban spaces which are responsive to community needs. |
| 2.3 Transport networks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide opportunities for effective and safely accessible public transport. To create a system of road and off-road networks that are legible, attractive and pleasant to use. |
| 2.4 Residential development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To encourage a diversity of housing forms and environments. To provide for a 'whole of life' approach for residential land use. |
| 2.5 Open space and community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop open space and planting theme for the main structure of the suburbs in keeping with concepts for West Belconnen as a whole and creating an individual identity for each area. To create a diversity of landscape experience which responds to community needs and offers distinct outdoor recreational and educational opportunities. |
| 2.6 Schools | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To assess the future level of demand for school enrolment, from both the proposed development areas and from within adjacent suburbs, to build in sufficient flexibility at existing schools to accommodate potential future changes in enrolment levels and patterns. To provide for safe and convenient access for children to existing schools in neighbouring parts of Belconnen. To provide a strong focus for future communities of West Belconnen on existing primary schools in adjoining suburbs, as their local schools. |
| 2.7 Other community and commercial uses | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide, where applicable, opportunities for the provision of local shopping and non-retail commercial facilities at a local centre located conveniently for all residents. To achieve flexibility of land use such that land not utilised for community facilities and/or commercial activities may be used for other purposes compatible with the location and scale of centre. |

3.3 Canberra Social Plan (2011)

The Canberra Social Plan sits underneath the **Canberra Plan – Towards our Second Century**.

Three themes support the vision of this Plan for Canberra:

- » Connection – creating a socially cohesive community now and for the future. Connected communities are welcoming, vibrant and adaptable. They refer to both the neighbourhood level and Canberra as a whole.
- » Belonging – making sure every individual has the opportunities and resources to reach their potential. Community participation is supported by responsive and welcoming services – particularly targeting people who are isolated, such as those experiencing mental illness, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and carers.
- » Collaboration – working together to improve the lives of all Canberrans. A shared commitment, strong partnerships and collaborative approaches across all sectors underpin this work.

Vision:

Canberra is a place where all people reach their potential, make a contribution and share the benefits of an inclusive community.

Profile of the ACT population

Relative to Australia's other States and Territories, the population of Canberra is characterised by:

- » High levels of education, workforce participation and average incomes
- » High levels of (self assessed) health
- » High levels of participation in sport, recreation and culture
- » An overall high standard of living, with pockets of concentrated disadvantage and social isolation.

Around 20% of people in the ACT (over 70,000 residents) were born overseas. And approximately 4,300 ACT residents (1.3%) identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Case studies

The Plan includes several case studies which have particular relevance for West Belconnen:

- » **People focused urban design in Belconnen Town Centre** – This important community hub for residents of north Canberra and the ACT incorporates retail, transport and improved cycling facilities for commuters. Nearby Belconnen Arts Centre and grounds provide an arts and cultural hub – with exhibitions, classes, community events, a café, festivals and concerts. Linked by walking and cycling paths, the centre is combined with the library, community services and educational facilities.

Belconnen Town Centre and Belconnen Arts Centre will act as important regional facilities for the new community of West Belconnen. Opportunities to link the new suburbs of West Belconnen to the Belconnen Town Centre via public transport and cycle ways are paramount.

- » **Libraries as community hubs** – The Kippax Library case study demonstrates the important role of libraries in the ACT, as a place for social interaction, self-discovery and learning. Libraries are shown to help address social isolation and to support positive health outcomes.

This service, which will support the new population at West Belconnen, is an important community asset now and into the future. The level of non-collection related services to the community may need to be enhanced in the future.

- » **Child and family centres** – The West Belconnen Child and Family Centre (opened in 2011) provides a one stop shop for prevention and early intervention services such as parent education sessions and programs for vulnerable families (including homework support). Primary health care services such as Maternal and Child Health Clinics and midwifery clinics also operate from the centre.

The Centre will provide an important district facility for the new community of West Belconnen. The Centre will provide services to the new community based on community demographics and need.

Schools for the future – Namadgi School in Canberra's south (opened in 2011) aims to function as a community hub and centre for excellence. The building and outdoor areas incorporate sustainable design features and planning for the school was supported by a process of community engagement.

Such a model should be considered for provision of the new primary school(s) for West Belconnen.

3.4 ACT Planning Strategy

West Belconnen is identified as a future urban investigation area in the ACT Planning Strategy adopted by the ACT Government on 26 June 2012. The Planning Strategy contains 9 strategies to achieve the plans outcomes and make Canberra more sustainable over time. A number of these strategies and their associated actions have particular relevance for community plan for West Belconnen. They are detailed below.

Strategy 4 **Ensure everyone has convenient access to a range of facilities, services and opportunities for social interaction by reinforcing the role of group and local centres as community hubs.**

Group and local centres will remain key meeting places and places of cultural and community expression. Despite changes to work and shopping patterns and community demographics, these centres can still be social and commercial hubs. Encouraging mixed use developments in these centres can provide affordable locations for new businesses and community services. More importantly, the centres can offer an alternative living environment to town centres and suburbs.

New residential areas must have sufficient space for, and high priority given to, the establishment of community facilities such as schools, meeting places, aged and child care centres, parks and play areas.

Short term action

- » Identify mixed use sites in town, group and local centres (through the master plan process) to support the viability and vibrancy of centres.
- » As part of this, give priority to identifying opportunities to partner with industry to provide community facilities in a more cost effective manner.

Strategy 5 **Enhance Canberra's system of public spaces, providing vibrant, pleasant urban parks and places that everyone can enjoy by ensuring they are safe and accessible for the most vulnerable in our community**

Creating new public spaces, improving the quality and maintenance of our existing spaces and improving access will encourage more people to enjoy Canberra's landscapes.

This strategy will guide planning and designing of streets and parks to be safe and enjoyable for the most vulnerable groups in our community, the elderly and children. By adopting this approach we ensure they are attractive for everyone.

The design and management of Canberra's network of open spaces – the street verges, parks and reserves – can encourage us to walk or cycle to work, shops or school. In tempting people to use these spaces we are fostering greater participation in the community and improving personal and public health

Short term actions

- » Further promote and develop opportunities for community gardens.
- » Develop new sports fields to support the new residential areas (in Gungahlin and Molonglo Valley and existing residential areas, such as Woden)

3.5 Study on Community Formation and Attitudes to Sustainability (ACTPLA, 2009)

This research was commissioned by the ACT Government to explore the relationship between community development and sustainability, and to investigate the perceptions, experience and expectations of residents in different areas of Canberra about community and sustainability. The study had several aims, with the most relevant for the West Belconnen project being: to explore new residents' expectations of social infrastructure and community development and their sense of identity with an area.

Participants from the communities of Harrison and Gungahlin Town Centre, two Greenfield sites in Canberra's north (with respectively lower and higher residential densities), were asked what 'community' meant to them. The most commonly identified infrastructure associated with new communities was: schools, shops, services and business, playgrounds and play groups. Social capital also featured strongly in participant responses. Knowing your neighbours, street parties and celebrations, as well as opportunities for social interaction were commonly identified as positive aspects of 'community'.

Expectations of community facilities were similar across both communities, with residents of both Harrison and Gungahlin identifying retail, recreation/entertainment, service facilities and other facilities/services as important. However, residents of Harrison expressed a strong desire for convenience shopping within walking distance.

Levels of local community involvement were mixed in Harrison and Gungahlin Town Centre. Overall there were limited social networks between neighbours, although community involvement was slightly higher in lower density Harrison. This was attributed to a small group of households in Harrison with similar circumstances, including some with school age children.

Provision of parks and recreational facilities in lower density Harrison provided respondents with a similar level of opportunity to meet neighbours as those in Gungahlin Town Centre. Community facilities were valued and were discussed in relation to opportunities for engaging with other local residents.

3.6 The Crace Study (Prof. Helen Berry University of Canberra, 2012, 2014)

The Crace Study tests assumptions about how "best practice" in urban development may, by influencing human behaviour, lead to better health. Best practice includes measures to make walking the easiest mode of transport and to provide places where people can interact to build safe connected communities. Run by the University of Canberra, The Crace Study assesses the benefits of such design measures primarily by surveying residents of the new Canberra suburb of

Crace over time while the suburb is still being developed and populated. This makes it possible to track changes in residents' thoughts, behaviours and health as the suburb is built around them. To establish points of comparison, the study also surveys Canberran residents who do not live in Crace. In addition, an international collaboration links *The Crace Study* with a similar study being conducted in Norway. This collaboration has not only increased the visibility of *The Crace Study*; it has broadened the kind of conclusions that can be drawn from it because results across the two studies can be examined for cross-cultural similarities and differences.

The suburb of Crace was developed by the Crace joint venture, which comprises: CIC Pty. Ltd. (Development company, project manager), Land Development Agency (local government), Defence Housing Australia and CHC Affordable Housing. When completed in 2015, Crace will house around 4,000 residents in 1,500 homes. Crace was designed as a 'mini-city': high-density urban precinct around a shopping centre surrounded by suburban areas, with some relatively smaller block size options. The street layout has a 'walkable' grid design, including wide walking/bike paths. Once the suburb is completed, houses will be in walking distance of multiple parks as well as shops and amenities with 25% of total land allocated for common use. These and other design features were based on best practice to create an attractive and safe neighbourhood that promotes fun activities, social interactions and sustainable living. Current thinking is that these design features will also have long-term benefits for the health and wellbeing of Crace residents. However, there are almost no studies that test across time whether building a suburb like this will actually produce health benefits and whether different sorts of people (in terms of age, family structure etc.) draw particular benefits from different design features. *The Crace Study* helps fill this gap, creating insights about good urban design for the Canberra region and beyond.

What are the findings so far?

2012 survey: Crace residents (n=180) were more positive about their suburb than people living elsewhere (n=97) and most Crace residents stated that the style of the suburb was one of the reasons they chose to live in Crace. Crace street design was assessed more positively than other places, with the exception that there were not yet many destinations for people to walk to or meet at. Residents were asked what they wanted for Crace with three themes emphasised as important for Crace.

Sense of Community – fun, friendly, nice people, community, sense of belonging, social groups, chance to meet people, community activities, community centre, people know their neighbours, people talk to each other.

Services and Amenities – shops, cafes, pubs, restaurants, bakery, facilities, services, post office, medical centre, petrol station, newsagency, pharmacy, hairdresser, ATM.

Outdoor Facilities and Space – bike paths, playgrounds, outdoor recreational facilities, walkable, easy to get around, places to walk, walking tracks, parks, parkland, open space, easy to walk to shops

2013 survey: Crace residents (n=375) were more likely to walk to parks than people living elsewhere (n=173), reflecting the number and variety of parks now open in Crace. More detail will be forthcoming in *The Crace Study 2013 Survey Report* (still to be released).

3.7 ACT Arts Policy Framework (artsACT, 2012)

The ACT Arts Policy Framework reflects the ACT Government's continuing commitment to support and strengthen the ACT arts sector and through it the wider community. It identifies arts priorities and provides a structure within which future arts policy will be developed, while guiding the implementation and review of existing policy and programs. The Framework is based on the following foundations:

- » Art is intrinsic. Art and artists are an essential part of our community.
- » The ACT is a unique community with a distinctive and valuable arts landscape.
- » Access to and participation in the arts is vital to a productive, healthy and creative community and a vibrant local arts scene.
- » Artists lead us to creative insight. Continuing engagement with the arts, from early childhood, is a fundamental part of social development and life-long learning.

Vision:
 Canberra and its region comprise an inclusive, unique and creative arts landscape where excellence is highly valued. The ACT is home to innovative artists and arts organisations and is an important part of the cultural richness of Australia.

It contains four principles to achieve the vision – and outlines key elements of each principle along with examples of supporting activities. The principles contained in the policy and a selection of the most relevant ‘elements’ of these are shown below.

Table 2 Relevant principles and related elements, ACT Arts Policy Framework

| Principles | Elements |
|---|---|
| Principle One: Facilitate Community Participation in and Access to the Arts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding local arts organisations and activities to continue to deliver arts outcomes for the ACT community. |
| Principle Two: Support Artistic Excellence and Artistic Diversity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting the intrinsic value of art and arts participation. • Encouraging artistic excellence through arts hubs that enable and support best practice. |
| Principle Three: Strengthen the Sustainability of Arts Organisations and the Capacity of the Arts to Contribute to Social and Economic Outcomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating new and enhancing existing arts hubs to build vibrancy in the local arts sector and provide increased opportunities for social development through the arts. |
| Principle Four: Foster Artistic Innovation and Creative Thinking | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitating connections between local arts organisations and other areas across government and the community, in particular the health and education sectors. |

3.8 Towards Zero Growth – Healthy Weight Action Plan (ACT Health, 2013)

A new action plan to reduce the level of obesity in the ACT community was recently launched. Towards Zero Growth sets out a goal of zero growth in obesity within the ACT, focusing on strategies that make active and healthy lifestyle choices easier. Despite the ACT population being the healthiest in Australia, 25% of children and 64% of adults in the ACT are overweight or obese.

Key actions in the Towards Zero Growth plan include:

- » Improve the availability of healthy food and drink options in ACT Government workplaces and events
- » Implement a Chief Minister's award scheme to reward healthy workplaces and food outlets

- » Develop and implement an ACT Government school food and drink policy with supporting guidelines that will mandate the implementation of the National Healthy School Canteen guidelines in ACT schools
- » Create new incentives for ACT workers and/or workplaces to participate in physical activity or active travel
- » Introduce health risk assessments for ACT Government staff with a view to extend these to the private sector
- » Restrict the advertising of unhealthy foods within the government's regulatory control
- » Improve awareness, skills and capability across the ACT in buying and preparing healthy food.

The document also proposes increasing the availability of free drinking water in public places and food outlets, a mandatory code for supermarkets to require at least one checkout aisle to be free of energy dense, nutrient poor foods, and regulating the sale of sugary drinks.

Our health is shaped by the way we live our daily lives in our neighbourhoods, schools and workplaces. As a result, many of the factors that influence what we eat or how active we are – for example how accessible and attractive footpaths and cycle paths are, or the availability of healthy food in schools and the community – lie outside of the traditional reach of the health sector (Towards Zero Growth – Healthy Weight Action Plan, ACT Government, 2013:9)

There is growing recognition that the built environment influences levels of physical activity, whether for transport or recreation. Good urban planning can shape our neighbourhoods to encourage active recreation and the active travel options of walking, cycling and public transport. As Canberra undergoes future development and urban renewal, the government will work to embed active living principles in its transport and urban planning processes (Towards Zero Growth – Healthy Weight Action Plan, ACT Government, 2013:14)

3.9 Active Living Impact Checklist (Heart Foundation, 2012)

The Heart Foundation's vision is for a built environment that promotes health, happiness and wellbeing. The Active Living impact checklist focuses on one major part of the problem – physical inactivity. The checklist aims to support active living as a fundamental design principle for new developments, as part of the planning phase. It builds on the Heart Foundation's healthy planning design objectives and previous work undertaken by the enHealth Council, Department of Health and Ageing, the Premier's Council for Active Living NSW, the Australian Local Government Association, the Planning Institute of Australia. ACT specific policy content has been developed through a local expert working group.

The checklist provides an initial measurement tool to promote better design outcomes for higher levels of physical activity on site to street level in the ACT. It contains 10 key design principles and a series of specific actions to achieve these.

1. Active transport: to achieve better health for people who walk, bicycle or take public transport.

Initiatives include minimising contact between pedestrians and cars, achieving easy wayfinding (eg signs, landmarks, path lighting, public art), traffic calming measures, design for bicycle access, etc.

2. Aesthetics: to achieve better health for people through friendly and safe places that will invite people and encourage exploration by foot or bicycle.

Initiatives include designing built form to contribute to a walking friendly urban environment, incorporating orientation features into public spaces (eg public art, lighting), and incorporating 'living green' canopies to support urban air and water quality.

3. Connectivity: to achieve better health for people through convenient and direct routes, whether by active travel for transport or recreation.

Initiatives include providing travel links that are attractive, safe, direct and convenient to support permeability and access; and incorporating shared paths that are sufficiently wide, with adequate sightlines, gradients, centreline markings, etc.

4. Environments for all people: to achieve better overall health for people by creating places where people can have a sense of belonging, comfort and be part of a community.

Initiatives include providing onsite opportunities for social interaction including transitional zones such as communal open spaces, meeting rooms, communal gardens, seating, children's active facilities, shade and weather protection; using climate conscious design solutions (eg green roofs, protection from wind and sun).

5. Mixed density: to achieve better overall health for people by creating a variety of buildings that support a broad selection of healthy and active lifestyles within a smaller footprint.

Ensure building height has an environmental performance-related outcome that complements/ supports the surrounding density mix with a focus on social return.

6. Mixed land use: to achieve better overall health for people by having destinations in close proximity to make active transport more viable and convenient.

Initiatives include location near centres including public transport, open space and other key destinations, and supporting wider linkages; compliance with the Liveable Housing Design Guidelines.

7. Parks and open spaces: to achieve better overall health for people as parks and open spaces can have the highest direct benefits to active living.

Initiatives include stimulating and attractive routes to key destinations, provision of street trees, weather protection, integrated landscaping.

8. Safety and surveillance: to achieve better overall health for people through a reduction of places that are perceived as unsafe. This can enhance the physical, mental and social wellbeing of a community.

Initiatives include crime prevention through environmental design measures; use of multiple entrances that are highly visible and separated from traffic; and an integrated approach to accessibility and legibility for all users.

9. Social inclusion: to achieve better overall health for people through greater social cohesiveness, a reduction of social isolation and increased social interaction.

Initiatives include public realm design that maximises social inclusion; convenient access for people who are mobility impaired; opportunities for community input to decision making about facility management and place making; and promoting a street focus with human scale (avoiding blank walls, etc).

10. Supporting infrastructure: to achieve better overall health for people as quality infrastructure can support the level of recreation, social interaction and active transport choices.

Initiatives include provision of supporting infrastructure in desirable locations (eg rest areas, information boards, toilets, water bubblers); encouraging use of stairs; use of motivational and directional signage for cycling/walking; providing end of trip facilities (eg bike parking, change rooms) onsite; lighting for night time safety.

3.10 NSW 2021 and South East NSW Regional Action Plan

NSW 2021: A Plan to Make NSW Number One sets the Government's agenda for change in NSW. This 10 year plan includes five strategies to make NSW number One. These are: *to rebuild the economy, return quality services, renovate infrastructure, restore accountability to government, and strengthen our local environment and communities*. It replaces the State Plan as the NSW Government's strategic business plan.

Each of the strategies is underpinned by goals and targets and priority actions. The most relevant for the West Belconnen Community Plan are as follows:

Return quality services

- » Improve education and learning outcomes for all students
- » Prevent and reduce the level of crime

Renovate infrastructure

- » Build liveable centres

Strengthen our local environment and communities

- » Protect our natural environment
- » Increase opportunities for people to look after their own neighbourhoods and environments
- » Make it easier for people to be involved in their communities
- » Increase opportunities for seniors in NSW to fully participate in community life
- » Fostering opportunity and partnership with aboriginal people
- » Enhance cultural, creative, sporting and recreation opportunities
- » Ensure NSW is ready to deal with major emergencies and natural disasters

The South East NSW Region Regional Action Plan

To complement NSW 2021 and existing long term initiatives, Regional Actions Plans identify immediate actions for the NSW Government to prioritise over the next few years. These plans are an initial response to key actions raised by communities across NSW during the consultation undertaken for NSW 2021.

The Yass Valley Council local government area, including the NSW portion of the West Belconnen Development is part of the South East region.



Area
41,348km²



Population
183,400 (2011) ▶ 243,400 (2031*)



Housing
87,200 (2011) ▶ 126,600 (2031*)



South East NSW has a total population of 183,400 people living in approximately 87,200 dwellings.

It is experiencing rapid population growth in the centres of Queanbeyan and Batemans Bay, which are developing as major subregional service hubs.

The **South East NSW Regional Action Plan** identifies the immediate actions the NSW Government will prioritise. These complement the long term strategies being developed for NSW and existing regional strategies.

The Action Plan focuses on growing the economy, improving transport connectivity, delivering quality and integrated services and protecting the natural

environment. The NSW Government in partnership with the community aims to create a vision for South East NSW which is:

- » Economically diverse, by supporting the expansion of existing businesses, attracting growth sectors and maximising opportunities for cross border economic development
- » Connected with efficient and integrated transport, through improved community transport services and links to health services
- » Well serviced to meet health and community service needs, providing support for the ageing and vulnerable population
- » Well planned, with integrated service planning, to support environmental, social and economic growth impacts
- » Supportive of our young people through education and training pathways which encourage young people to stay within the region
- » Sustainable, with the natural environment protected for current and future generations.

Regional priorities and the most relevant actions for the West Belconnen project are outlined in the following table.

Table 3 Priorities and relevant actions, South East NSW Regional Action Plan

| Priorities | Actions |
|--|--|
| <p>Priority 1: Diversify the economy and provide sustainable employment options</p> <p>To support sustainable economic growth, the NSW Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support existing business and industry to expand and provide sustainable employment options • Diversify the economy by attracting and supporting key growth sectors including renewable energy, fresh food production and small business • Deliver regional infrastructure that supports economic growth • Maximise opportunities for cross border economic development. <p><i>NSW 2021 Goal 3 – Drive economic growth in regional NSW</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support business and industry to growth • Support small business • Deliver regional infrastructure that supports economic growth • Upgrade local water infrastructure • Partner with the ACT Government to develop the region |
| <p>Priority 2: Provide accessible, efficient and integrated transport services</p> <p>To provide accessible, efficient and integrated transport services the NSW Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop long term transport strategies that improve access to employment, business opportunities and services • Deliver road infrastructure upgrades and manage local congestion issues • Improve road safety and freight logistics. <p><i>NSW 2021 Goal 8 – Grow patronage on public transport by making it a more attractive choice</i></p> <p><i>NSW 2021 Goal 10 – Improve road safety</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan • Regional Transport Plan for Southern NSW • Deliver road infrastructure upgrades • Manage local traffic congestion |
| <p>Priority 3: Deliver quality health and community services</p> <p>The NSW Government will work in partnership with local government, non-government organisations and community members to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in and maintain the regional infrastructure required to deliver improved health, aged care and family services • Support our ageing population and vulnerable families and individuals • Foster the development of the non-government organisation sector. <p><i>NSW 2021 Goal 12 – Provide world class clinical services with timely access and effective infrastructure</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in and maintain health infrastructure • Provide more support for an ageing population • Enhance and further develop services for the ageing population • Support vulnerable families and individuals • Foster development of the non-government organisation sector |

| Priorities | Actions |
|--|--|
| <p><i>NSW 2021 Goal 13 – Better protect the most vulnerable members of our community and break the cycle of poverty</i></p> | |
| <p>Priority 4: Improve strategic planning and service delivery</p> <p>The NSW Government will improve strategic planning and service delivery by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with the ACT Government to implement the ACT and NSW Memorandum of Understanding for Regional Collaboration to address cross-border issues in the area around the ACT Developing new Regional Growth Plans that reflect an integrated approach to infrastructure planning, land use planning and transport planning. <p><i>NSW 2021 Goal 32 – Involve the community in decision making on government policy, services and projects</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the coordination of strategic planning in the region <p>The NSW Government is improving the coordination and management of growth and development in South East NSW through strategic planning initiatives including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working in collaboration with the ACT Government to develop an ACT-NSW Land Use and Infrastructure Plan to deliver collaborative strategic land use and growth related infrastructure planning across the broader South East NSW region Reviewing and updating the Sydney-Canberra Corridor and South Coast Regional Strategies to reflect the NSW Government’s new integrated planning approach that incorporates land use planning, infrastructure planning and transport planning. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver customer focused services <p>A one-stop shop will be opened in Queanbeyan by mid 2013 to make it easier for people to access Government transaction services, improve customer convenience and reduce lost productivity for local businesses.</p> <p>The NSW Government will work with the ACT Government to progress the ACT and NSW Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for Regional Collaboration. The NSW and ACT Government agreed that priority actions under this MoU include Integrated Service Planning initially focussing on the health and education sectors.</p> |
| <p>Priority 5: Improve access and options for education and employment</p> <p>To improve access and options for education, the NSW Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build on options for education to encourage students to stay at school Offer a range of strategies to support students’ transition from school to higher education and the workforce Continue to provide targeted training to build on the region’s skill base. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide training to meet the skills needs of local business and industry |

| Priorities | Actions |
|--|--|
| <p><i>NSW 2021 Goal 6 – Strengthen NSW’s skills base</i></p> <p><i>NSW 2021 Goal 15 – Improve education and learning outcomes for all students</i></p> | |
| <p>Priority 6: Manage our natural resources and protect the environment</p> <p>Growth and development must be balanced to ensure valuable agricultural and food production areas are retained and the region’s valuable biodiversity is protected.</p> <p>To better manage the region’s natural resources and to protect the environment, the NSW Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainably manage our natural resources and biodiversity • Identify and better understand the impacts of climate risk and variability on communities, the environment and water sources • Develop and implement strategies to reduce the impacts of pest and weeds • Develop strategies to manage waste and reduce the impacts of littering and illegal dumping. <p><i>NSW 2021 Goal 22 – Protect our natural environments</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carefully manage the region’s natural resources to deliver long term sustainability • Responding to climate risk and variability • Protect built assets and public safety from flood hazards |

South East NSW Regional Action Plan (2012)

3.11 Sydney Canberra Corridor Regional Strategy 2006-2031

The Sydney–Canberra Corridor Regional Strategy applies to the local government areas of Wingecarribee, Goulburn Mulwaree, Upper Lachlan, Yass Valley, Palerang and Queanbeyan, and is one of a number of regional strategies prepared by the Department of Planning. The Sydney–Canberra Corridor Regional Strategy builds on previous planning work, including the 1995 Sydney–Canberra Corridor Strategy as well as the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and Subregion Planning Strategy.

The aims of the Strategy are to:

- » Cater for a housing demand of up to 25 200 new dwellings by 2031 to accommodate the additional 46 350 people expected in the Region over the period 2031.
- » Increase the amount of housing in existing centres to ensure the needs of future households are better met, in particular the needs of smaller households and an ageing population.
- » Manage the environmental impact of settlement by focusing new urban development in existing identified growth areas such as Bowral, Goulburn and Queanbeyan.

- » Only consider additional development sites if it can be demonstrated that they satisfy the Sustainability Criteria
- » No new rural residential zones will be supported unless as part of an agreed structure plan or local settlement strategy.
- » Ensure an adequate supply of land to support economic growth and provide capacity to accommodate a projected 27 800 new jobs, particularly
 - » in the areas of manufacturing, transport and logistics, business services, health, aged care and tourism.
- » Limit development in places constrained by important primary industry resources and significant scenic and cultural landscapes.
- » Protect the cultural and Aboriginal heritage values and visual character of rural towns and villages and surrounding landscapes.

3.12 Yass Valley Local Environmental Plan 2013

The 2013 LEP replaces the three LEP's previously covering the Yass Valley Local Government Area. Local Environmental Plans set out planning provisions for Local Government Areas. Through zoning and development controls they guide the ways in which land is used and managed.

The aims of the 2013 LEP are as follows:

- (a) to establish planning controls that promote sustainable development,
- (b) to protect high quality agricultural land and encourage emerging agricultural industries,
- (c) to encourage housing diversity,
- (d) to promote employment-generating tourism,
- (e) to provide for commercial and industrial development,
- (f) to encourage the establishment of retail and professional services in urban locations,
- (g) to protect and enhance the character of each of the villages in Yass Valley,
- (h) to enhance service provision in each of the villages in Yass Valley,
- (i) to protect and conserve the cultural heritage and history of Yass Valley,
- (j) to protect and enhance the environmental and biodiversity values of Yass Valley,
- (k) to minimise land use conflicts.

3.13 Yass Valley 2030 Community Strategic Plan 2013-2030

The Yass Valley 2030 Community Strategic Plan (CSP) 2013-2030 outlines the long term aspirations of the Shire's community for at least the next 20 years. The CSP was developed in late 2010/early 2011 after extensive community consultation and was endorsed by Council in June 2011. Version 2 was adopted in June 2013 following the local government elections.

The CSP includes a number of themes under which sit a range of long term goals, strategies and targets. Relevant goals for the West Belconnen Community Strategic Plan are as follows:

Community and Culture

3.1 Social and cultural life in our townships is expanded

3.1.1 Encourage / provide incentives for the establishment of a variety of social and cultural venues

3.1.2 Create local community and business partnerships and incentives to establish social and cultural events such as live music, festivals and other public events for people of all ages

3.1.3 Develop appropriate community infrastructure to service the needs of the Yass Valley community

3.1.4 We have a range of opportunities for volunteer involvement in local programs and projects

3.2 Our communities are strong, resilient and inclusive

3.2.1 Activities are established that strengthen our communities

3.2.2 Empower the community through capacity building programs such as education and awareness

3.2.3 Promote community involvement through appropriate participation in decision making

Recreation and open space

4.2 We have extensive parklands throughout the local area that are well maintained and child friendly

4.2.1 Ensure that planning and provision of parklands and open space meets community needs

4.2.2 Develop specific plans of management for parklands and open space areas

4.2.3 Ensure that appropriate parkland is provided in new urban release areas

4.2.4 Ensure all playground infrastructure continues to meet Australian standards

4.3 Local outdoor recreation options are expanded

4.3.1 Establish a network of walking tracks and bicycle paths

4.3.2 Establish a network of horse trails

4.3.3 Provide improved and expanded skate park facilities

3.14 Implications of policy for West Belconnen

Planning for West Belconnen needs to incorporate a comprehensive range of accessible community facilities that are multipurpose and flexible

Housing in West Belconnen should be affordable and adaptable and include accommodation for special needs

Community vitality and safety are key policy objectives that are important to the planning and design of West Belconnen

The provision of community facilities is recognised as critical to achieving social sustainability and inclusion

The Social Plan themes of connection, belonging and collaboration are important policy influences for this Community Plan and planning for West Belconnen more generally

Social infrastructure, identified in research as including shops, businesses and playgrounds, as well as social capital, are identified as important aspects of community for residents of new development areas

4 Existing conditions

4.1 Existing community profile

The following profile of the Belconnen District population is based on data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2011 Census of Population and Housing. The district of Belconnen (Statistical Areas Level 3 (SA3)) is compared with the wider Australian Capital Territory Area (Greater Capital City Statistical Area) to ensure an adequate benchmark for comparison.

The community profile is useful in understanding the population characteristics of the area into which residents of the West Belconnen community will be moving.

4.1.1 Population overview

| Indicator | Belconnen District (no.) | % | Australian Capital Territory (no.) | % |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------|------------------------------------|-------|
| Population (2011) | 92,444 | - | 356,585 | - |
| Age groups (%) | | | | |
| 0-4 | 6,541 | 7.1% | 23,813 | 6.7% |
| 5-11 | 7,517 | 8.1% | 29,735 | 8.3% |
| 12-17 | 6,203 | 6.7% | 26,019 | 7.3% |
| 18-24 | 11,139 | 12.0% | 41,317 | 11.6% |
| 25-54 | 40,023 | 43.3% | 158,846 | 44.5% |
| 55-64 | 10,753 | 11.6% | 38,720 | 10.9% |
| 65 and over | 10,268 | 11.1% | 38,135 | 10.7% |
| Median age (yrs) | 34 | - | 34 | - |

The age distribution across the Belconnen district is broadly comparable with that of the wider Australian Capital Territory. The median age across both areas is 34, further suggesting a comparable age range across both areas.

The percentage of people aged 65 years and over is higher than that of the wider ACT. This has implications for the delivery of services and also reinforces the need to provide facilities that will enable people to 'age in place'.

4.1.3 Family and household overview

| Indicator | Belconnen District | % | Australian Capital Territory (no.) | % |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|-------|------------------------------------|-------|
| Household type (%) | | | | |
| Family household | 24079 | 72.2% | 91979 | 71.1% |
| Lone person | 7405 | 22.2% | 30248 | 23.4% |
| Group household | 1872 | 5.6% | 7198 | 5.6% |
| Average household size (no. people) | - | 2.6 | | 2.6 |
| Family household structure (%) | | | | |
| Couples with children | 11027 | 45.0% | 43191 | 46.2% |
| Couples without children | 9445 | 38.6% | 35150 | 37.6% |
| Single parent families | 3601 | 14.7% | 13601 | 14.6% |
| Other family | 409 | 1.7% | 1452 | 1.6% |

The proportion of family, lone person and group households in the Belconnen area is broadly comparable with the wider ACT area. The Belconnen area however exhibits a slightly lower proportion of family households comprised of couples with children and a slightly higher proportion of couples without children than the wider ACT area.

4.1.4 Cultural diversity

| Indicator | Belconnen District | % | Australian Capital Territory (no.) | % |
|--|--------------------|-------|------------------------------------|-------|
| Cultural diversity (%) | | | | |
| Aboriginal or TSI heritage | 1155 | 1.2% | 5154 | 1.4% |
| Overseas born | 22,014 | 23.8% | 86,165 | 24.2% |
| Speaks language other than English at home | 17,011 | 18.4% | 64,572 | 18.1% |

Cultural diversity in the Belconnen area is broadly comparable with the wider ACT area.

4.1.6 Employment characteristics

| Indicator | Belconnen District | % | Australian Capital Territory (no.) | % |
|--|--------------------|-------|------------------------------------|-------|
| Median household income (\$) | - | 1802 | - | 1920 |
| Labour Force Status - persons people in the labour force aged 15+ (%) | | | | |
| Employed full-time | 32629 | 63.4% | 131871 | 65.0% |
| Employed part-time | 13479 | 26.2% | 50947 | 25.1% |
| Unemployed | 1940 | 3.8% | 7257 | 3.6% |
| Population aged 15+ and not in the labour force (%) | | | | |

There are a slightly smaller proportion of people in the Belconnen area who are employed full time, and a slightly large proportion who are employed part time than the wider ACT area.

| Indicator | Belconnen District | % | Australian Capital Territory (no.) | % |
|--|--------------------|-------|------------------------------------|-------|
| Employment Industry (%) | | | | |
| Professionals | 14047 | 28.4% | 57997 | 29.6% |
| Clerical and administrative workers | 9666 | 19.5% | 37478 | 19.2% |
| Managers | 6801 | 13.7% | 31001 | 15.8% |
| Technician and trade workers | 5566 | 11.2% | 19882 | 10.2% |
| Community and personal service workers | 4884 | 9.9% | 18183 | 9.3% |
| Sales workers | 3583 | 7.2% | 13341 | 6.8% |
| Labourers, machinery operators and drivers | 4023 | 8.1% | 13917 | 7.1% |

There are some subtle trends evident when considering employment industry across the Belconnen area and the wider Australian Capital area. The Belconnen area exhibits slightly lower levels of professionals and managers, and slightly higher levels of technicians and trade workers and labourers, machinery operators and drivers than the wider Australian Capital Territory area.

4.1.7 Educational characteristics

| Indicator | Belconnen District | % | Australian Capital Territory (no.) | % |
|---|--------------------|-------|------------------------------------|-------|
| Qualification Level (total persons aged 15 + and with a qualification) | | | | |
| University Qualification | 30598 | 63.6% | 124702 | 66.6% |
| Certificate (Tafe etc.) | 10870 | 22.6% | 39034 | 20.9% |

The Belconnen area has a slightly lower proportion of people with a university qualification, and a slightly higher proportion of people with a certificate than the wider ACT area. This trend correlates with the slightly higher proportions of technicians and trade workers and labourers, machinery operators and drivers than the wider ACT area.

4.1.8 Housing characteristics

| Indicator | Belconnen District | % | Australian Capital Territory (no.) | % |
|------------------------------|--------------------|-------|------------------------------------|-------|
| Housing types (%) | | | | |
| House | 25694 | 77.0% | 94266 | 72.8% |
| Semi-detached house | 4929 | 14.8% | 18811 | 14.5% |
| Apartment | 2717 | 8.1% | 16071 | 12.4% |
| Other | 0 | 0.0% | 228 | 0.2% |
| Housing tenure (%) | | | | |
| Fully owned | 10056 | 30.1% | 36739 | 28.4% |
| Being purchased | 13339 | 40.0% | 50392 | 38.9% |
| Rented | 9206 | 27.6% | 39592 | 30.6% |
| Other / not stated | 261 | 0.8% | 816 | 0.6% |
| Dwelling status (%) | | | | |
| Occupied private dwellings | 33357 | 93.7% | 129423 | 92.7% |
| Unoccupied private dwellings | 2251 | 6.3% | 10197 | 7.3% |

The Belconnen area has a higher proportion of separate houses and a lower proportion of apartments than the wider ACT area. Belconnen also exhibits a higher proportion of households that are fully owner or being purchased, and a lower proportion of houses being rented than the wider ACT area.

4.2 Existing social infrastructure

4.2.1 Overview

Existing social infrastructure in the areas surrounding the West Belconnen site have been identified and mapped for the purpose of understanding existing supply, spatial location and any existing capacity to absorb future population growth. Given the nature of the immediate locality surrounding the site, existing facilities and services in close proximity are limited, and consequentially, many facilities do not have the capacity to serve the needs of a large incoming population or future workforce.

4.2.2 Childcare facilities

There are few existing child care facilities located west of Kingsford Smith Drive. Centres to the West of Kingsford Smith Drive are as follows

Table 4 Child Care centres west of Kingsford Smith Drive

| Centre | Age Range | Hours | Current vacancies |
|--|---------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Cooinda Cottage Long Day Care Centre Charnwood | Birth to school age | 7.45am-5.45pm Monday – Friday | Every day and age group |
| Brindabella Christian College Early Learning Centre | Birth to school age | 8am-6pm Monday – Friday | Every day and age group |
| St Thomas Aquinas West Belconnen Early Learning Centre | Birth to school age | 7.45am-5.45pm Monday – Friday | Every day and age group |
| Flynn Early Childhood Centre Long Day care | Birth to school age | 7.45am-5.45pm Monday – Friday | Most ages groups most days except 3 years to school age on Tuesday and Thursday |

Source: www.mychild.gov.au (date reviewed 1/5/14)

In addition to the existing facilities a new early learning centre is being constructed next to the West Belconnen Child and Family Centre on Stark Street at Kippax (Holt). This centre is anticipated to open in May 2015 with 90 places available. It will be offering spaces from birth to school age.

The availability of child care facilities increases markedly with distance from the study area centre with numerous facilities in Belconnen and Bruce. An analysis of vacancy data on www.mychild.gov.au highlights that seven of the 24 facilities in the wider Belconnen area do not have any vacancies currently available. A number of these facilities also have very long waiting lists, some of which are up to two years.

15 of the 24 facilities identified have a mixture of vacancies available across the week, with most vacancies available on Mondays and Fridays. Amongst these 15, five facilities have vacancies on all days of the week. Two of the facilities did not provide vacancy information.

This data suggests that there is a reasonable level of vacancies within existing child care facilities within proximity of the study area.

4.2.3 Education facilities

Schools

There are a number of primary (government and non-government) and secondary schools located in proximity to the West Belconnen study area. The closest public schools to the site are Kingsford Smith School in Holt, which provides for years P – 10, MacGregor Primary (P - 6) and Cranleigh School in Holt. Cranleigh School provides specialist educational programs for children with developmental delays, autism, moderate to severe intellectual or multiple disabilities in the age range of 3-12 years. A variety of other schools are located within 15 – 20 kilometres from the site. The closest public College (10-12) is Hawker College in Murrarji Street Hawker.

A number of non-government schools are also located in Charnwood including Brindabella Christian College - Charnwood campus (P – 4) and St Thomas Aquinas Primary (K-6). St Francis Xavier College (7-12) is located in Florey.

Meetings held with the ACT Department of Education and Training in October and December 2013 indicate that the closest schools to the site (Macgregor Primary and Kingsford Smith) are already above critical enrolment. Details obtained during the meeting indicate that Latham Primary is the only existing school likely to have any capacity to absorb an increase in student numbers, however, growth being experienced in West Macgregor may utilise much of this existing capacity.

Outcomes from the meetings indicate that there is likely to be capacity available at high schools and college and therefore, largest demand will be experienced in P-6. The Department has a preference that students attend local schools closest to their homes rather than travelling to surrounding suburbs. Based on the development supporting 12,000 dwellings and 30,000 people, it is considered that there will be a requirement for a number of new schools to support the incoming population, with early provision of a primary school to accommodate the first stage of West Belconnen development a key consideration.

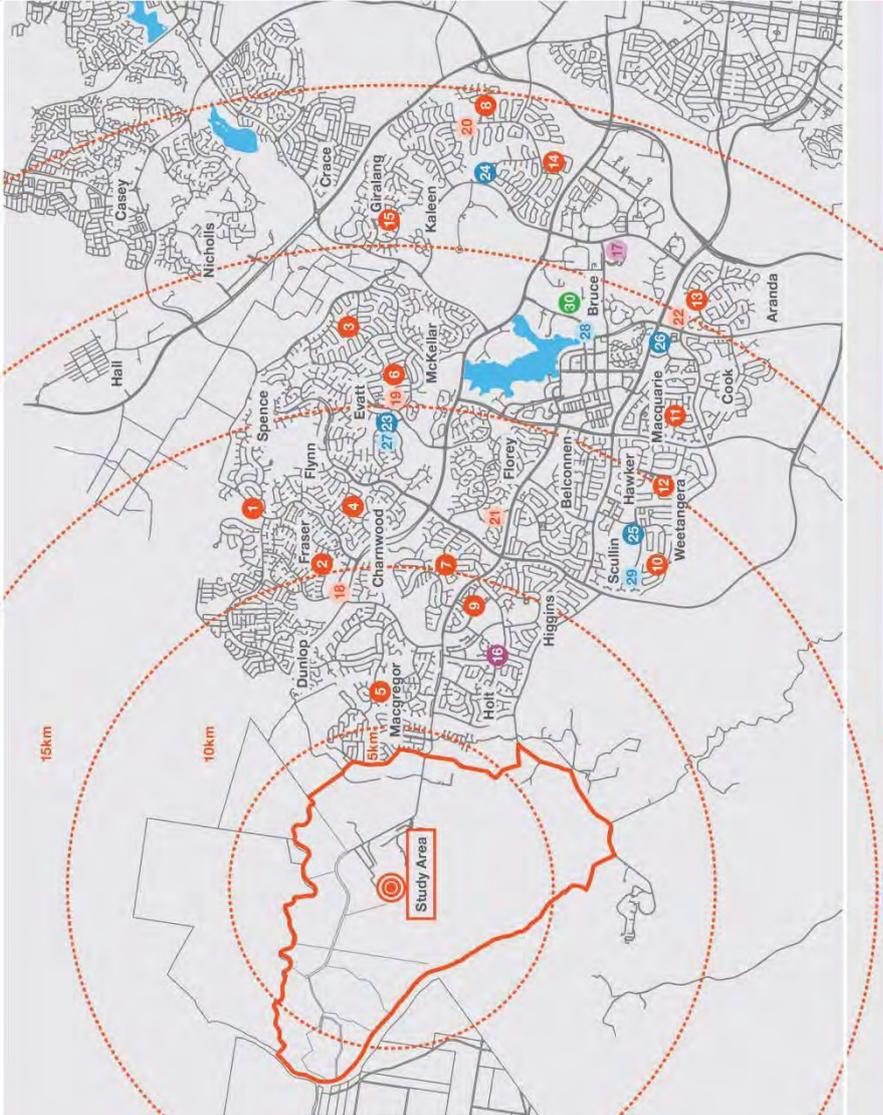
It is important to note that the incoming West Belconnen population will grow over a long period of time (up to 40 years). During that time, the utilisation of school facilities will rise and fall considerably. Work is continuing with ACT Education to determine the impacts of this changing utilisation pattern and understand its impacts on school provision in West Belconnen.

Tertiary facilities

The closest tertiary facility to the site is the University of Canberra. The University offers undergraduate and postgraduate courses covering six main learning areas. These include applied science, health, art and design, business, government and law, education and information and sciences and engineering.

Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) is the ACT's principal vocational education and training provider offering skill development to individuals, employers and industry in Canberra. It is a statutory authority of the ACT Government. The closest campus is CIT Bruce which offers a range of courses including building and construction and horticulture.

Educational Facilities



- Primary Schools – Government**
 - 1 Fraser Primary
 - 2 Charmwood – Dunlop School (includes Belconnen Primary Introductory English Centre)
 - 3 Evatt Primary
 - 4 Mt Rogers Community School
 - 5 Macgregor Primary
 - 6 Miles Franklin Primary
 - 7 Latham Primary
 - 8 Kaleen Primary
 - 9 Cranleigh School
 - 10 Hawker Primary
 - 11 Macquarie Primary
 - 12 Weetangera Primary
 - 13 Aranda Primary
 - 14 Maribyrnong Primary
 - 15 Giralang Primary
 - 16 Combined Primary/High Schools – Government (P-10)
 - 17 Kingsford Smith School (P-10)
 - 18 Combined Primary/High/Secondary Schools – Non-Government
 - 19 Radford College (P-12)
- Primary Schools – Non-Government**
 - 18 St Thomas Aquinas Primary
 - 19 St Monicas Primary
 - 20 St Michaels Primary
 - 21 St John the Apostle
 - 22 St Vincents Primary
- High Schools - Government:**
 - 23 Melba Copland Secondary School High School
 - 24 University of Canberra High School Kaleen
 - 25 Belconnen High
 - 26 Canberra High
- Secondary Colleges:**
 - 27 Melba Copland Secondary School – College Campus
 - 28 University of Canberra Senior Secondary College, Lake Ginninderra, Belconnen ACT
 - 29 Hawker College
- Tertiary Institutions:**
 - 30 University of Canberra

West Belconnen

Map Educational Facilities



4.2.4 Community and cultural facilities

There are a number of community facilities located within reasonable proximity (within 10 kilometres) of the centre of the study area. These include:

- » Strathnairn Homestead Gallery – Located within the West Belconnen study area, this facility consists of converted 1920s homesteads beyond the western fringe of Holt. In addition it includes studios for artists, a foundry, paper making facilities and a number of venues for community events and classes. The facility provides regular exhibitions of woodwork, photography, sculpture, glass, textiles, ceramics and mixed media. A meeting with Arts ACT in October 2013 outlined the potential for Strathnairn to become more of a mixed-use facility.
- » Holt Community Hub - The Holt Community Hub and Neighbourhood Hall provides co-location opportunities for complementary organisations, with a focus on mixed community and health based services. The Holt Community Hub includes tenancy space for 6 community organisations including Carers ACT, Anglicare Canberra and Goulburn and Sharing Places who have relocated to the hub, with National Brain Injury Foundation and Sexual Health and Family Planning ACT to relocate at a future date. The Hub also includes a large hall (capacity approximately 100) with an attached small meeting room available for community hire. The site has the capacity to allow other facilities to be added via an extension or construction of new buildings.
- » Kippax Library – Kippax Library is a small library with a range of material for a diversity of ages. These include magazines, DVDs, CDs, Audio books on CD. The Library is open Monday to Saturday. A meeting with Libraries ACT in November 2013 indicated that the Library has some capacity for expansion to cater for some of the growth expected from the West Belconnen development.
- » West Belconnen Child and Family Centre - The Centre offers a range of programs, including:
 - > Drop-in parenting information and support;
 - > Parenting programs,
 - > Children's behaviour support clinic;
 - > Family case-coordination and home visiting;
 - > A range of targeted and universal playgroups at the centre and in the community;
 - > Services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and community;
 - > A range of external agencies operate from the centre offering a range of health services, counselling, and other assistance.

In addition to community facilities located within 10 kilometres of the centre of the study area, a number of other facilities are located between 10 and 20 kilometres. The most sizeable of these facilities are the Belconnen Library and Community Centre and the Belconnen Arts Centre, both of which are located in the Belconnen Town Centre.

At the meeting with Arts ACT in October 2013, it was identified that that stage 2 of Belconnen Arts Centre is now being planned, which involves the expansion of the existing facility to include formal exhibition space, a dance studio and performance space. Conclusions from the meeting were that arts space is well provided for in the area.

4.2.5 Health and support services

The closest major health facilities are located within 20 – 25 kilometres of the centre of the study area. These facilities include:

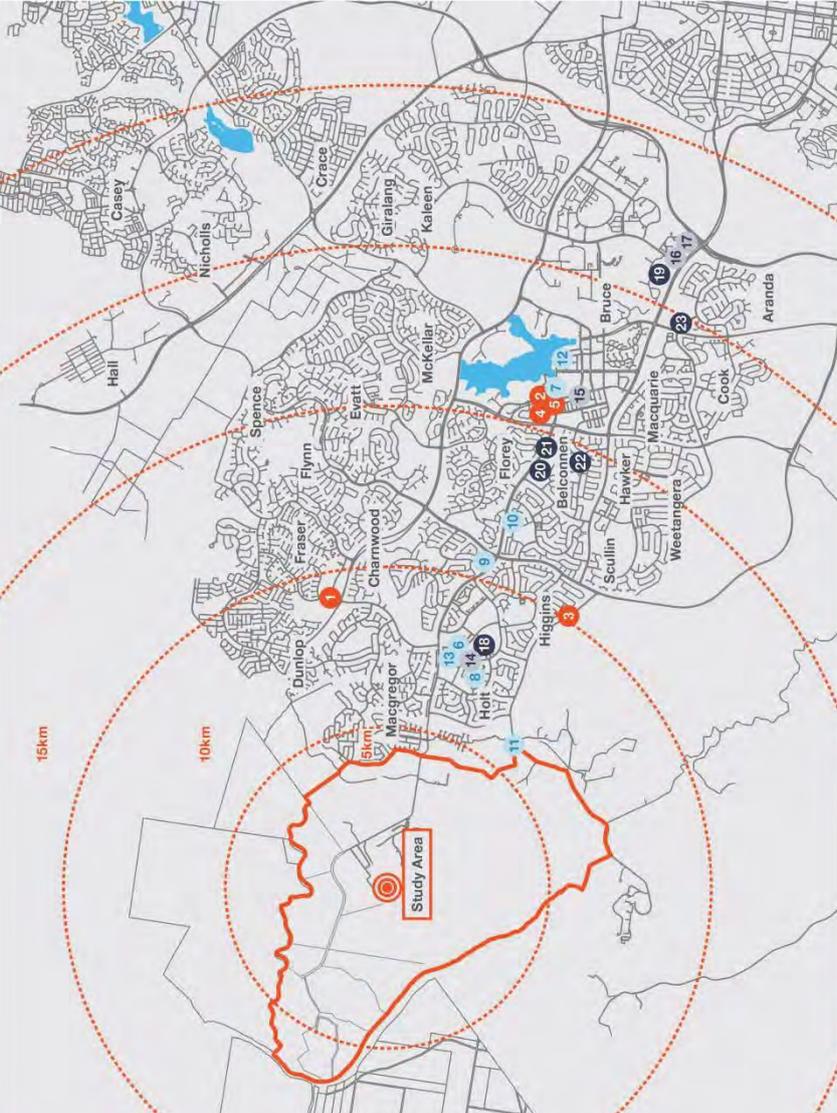
- » Calvary Hospital (Public) – This facility provides cancer treatment services, coronary care, elective surgery, emergency department services, geriatric assessment, hospice care facilities, obstetrics, outpatient services, psychiatric unit facilities and rehabilitation services.
- » Calvary Hospital (Private) – This facility provides elective surgery, outpatient services and psychiatric unit facilities.
- » University of Canberra Hospital (Public) (Proposed for completion in 2017) – This facility remains in the planning and design stages, however it will be dedicated to rehabilitation and related activities. The Hospital will include physiotherapy and other allied health services, including a rehabilitation gym and hydrotherapy pool, among other features and services. It will also provide sub-acute mental health services.
- » Belconnen Community Health Centre – the new Belconnen Community Health Centre on the corner of Lathlain and Cohen Streets, opposite Westfield Belconnen delivers a comprehensive range of services to the Belconnen community. Services include audiometry, alcohol and drug counselling, cancer counselling, community nursing, community paediatric and child health, community rehabilitation, dental, diabetes, maternal and child health, mental health, social work, nutrition, physiotherapy and women’s health.
- » Belconnen Community Service (BCS) is a regional community service providing services, programs and activities for people in the Belconnen Region. BCS offers integrated and inclusive services to the community, including those who have diverse backgrounds and abilities and from socially and financially disadvantaged areas. These services include:
 - > Housing and Homelessness
 - > Mental Health
 - > Youth Services
 - > Family Support
 - > Children’s Behaviour Support
 - > Child Care
 - > Aged Care
 - > Disability
 - > Transport
 - > Supported Playgroups
 - > Financial Support
 - > Sport and Recreation

Aged Care

A number of aged care facilities are located within relatively proximity to the site. The closest facility is Canberra Masonic Homes in Holt (10 kilometres from the centre of the study area). Between 15 – 25 kilometres of the centre of the study area there are a number of other aged care facilities located within Belconnen Centre, Florey and Aranda. These facilities provide a mix of high care and low care (hostel) beds.

Community Facilities

- Emergency Services:**
- 1 West Belconnen Emergency Hub – Ambulance, Fire & Rescue
 - 2 Belconnen Fire Station
 - 3 Molonglo RFS & SES
 - 4 Belconnen Police Station
 - 5 Belconnen Ambulance Station
- Major Health Facilities:**
- 14 West Belconnen Child and Family Centre
 - 15 Belconnen Community Health Centre
 - 16 Calvary Hospital (Public)
 - 17 Calvary Hospital (Private)
- Aged Care Facility:**
- 18 Canberra Masonic Homes
- Major Community Facilities:**
- 6 Kippax Library
 - 7 Belconnen Library & Community Centre
 - 8 Holt Community Hub
 - 9 Rotary Club for Ginninderra
 - 10 Hawker Guide Hall
 - 11 Strathairn Homestead Gallery
 - 12 Belconnen Arts Centre
 - 13 West Belconnen Child and Family Centre
- Major Health Facilities:**
- 19 Calvary Retirement Community Canberra
 - 20 Ginninderra Gardens Retirement Village & Nursing Home
 - 21 Villaggio Sant Antonio Retirement Village
 - 22 Ridgecrest Retirement Village
 - 23 Armit at Aranda



West Belconnen Map Community Facilities



An analysis of www.myagedcare.gov.au and direct consultation with some of these facilities indicates that there are currently low vacancy levels in existing facilities. Two facilities were able to be contacted directly for information regarding vacancy levels. Canberra Masonic Homes had no vacancies within the nursing home or independent living facility. Ridgecrest Retirement Village had three vacancies in their independent living facility and no vacancies within their hostel or dementia facility. Villagio Sant Antonio also had no vacancies within their independent living accommodation or their hostel and dementia facility at the time of consultation (late February 2014).

4.2.6 Emergency and justice services

The key emergency service facility that is closest to West Belconnen is the newly constructed West Belconnen Emergency Hub – Ambulance, Fire and Rescue located in Charnwood. In Higgins, and approximately 10 kilometres from the centre of the study area, is the Molonglo Rural Fire Service (RFS) and State Emergency Service (SES). Other facilities, including Belconnen Ambulance, Police and Fire Stations are located in the existing Belconnen Town Centre.

Meetings held with the ACT Emergency Services Agency (ESA) in November 2013 indicated that early growth associated with the West Belconnen site could be catered for with the provision of additional staff, however significant future growth may require the development of additional facilities, or an expansion of existing facilities.

4.2.7 Recreation

Kings Swim Centre is the closest recreational facility to the site and is located in the suburb of Macgregor. The Centre is privately owned and provides a diversity of aquatic facilities for both children and adults. However access to the centre is restricted as this is a private facility that operates primarily as a swim school.

The main aquatic and multi-purpose indoor sports facility available to the public is Canberra International Sports and Aquatic Centre at Belconnen. This is open year round. Big Splash at Jamison (Macquarie) is a seasonally open water park. Nearby in Bruce is the Australian Institute of Sport which provides facilities that develop and produce world, Olympic and Paralympic champions. These facilities are open to the public but often with restricted opening hours. *

The key playing field provision in the area is the Kippax District Playing Field. While some existing capacity exists at the moment, it is anticipated that this capacity will be taken up by growth in adjacent areas. It is anticipated that residents of both the new suburbs of West Belconnen and Molonglo 3 will utilise these facilities.

ACT Sport and Recreation favours a centralised model of playing field provision which is more efficient for maintenance and also supports viability of local sports clubs. As a result more local and neighbourhood fields, such as Holt Neighbourhood Oval have been 'turned off'.

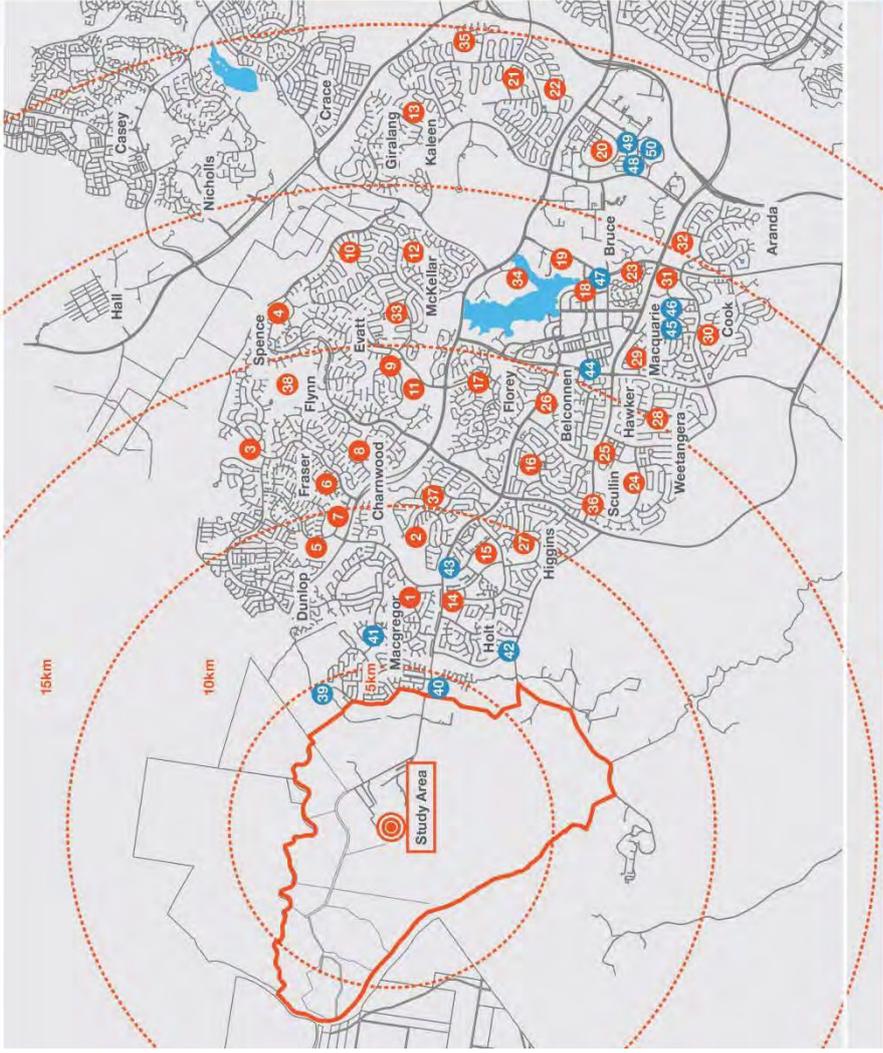
Tennis courts available to the public are located at Holt (Belconnen Wests Tennis Club- 8 Outdoor Synthetic Grass Courts and Kippax Tennis Club 4 Outdoor Synthetic Grass Courts) and Melba Tennis Club (8 Outdoor Synthetic Grass Courts). There are no squash courts in Belconnen available to the public.

Immediately adjacent to the project site on Spofforth Street Holt is the Magpies Belconnen Golf Club one of the most challenging 18 hole public courses in the ACT region. This also includes a licenced club house. Members of the public are welcome to play. Other Golf Clubs are located in the inner north of Canberra and in Gungahlin.

Belconnen Pony Club is located on Parkwood Road in Macgregor. The Parkwood Horse Holding Paddocks are located on Parkwood Rd Belconnen (behind West Macgregor). This is an ACT Government Horse Paddock and provides affordable and accessible horse agistment to the Canberra community. Parkwood is approximately 70 hectares divided into 9 paddocks and includes holding yards, washbay and a riding area with sand arena. There are two herds at Parkwood as it is such a large land area. Parkwood offers excellent grazing. Parkwood Horse Holding paddocks are located on the National Bicentennial Trail for riding out. The Bicentennial National Trail, Australia's premier long distance trekking route for the self-reliant trekker, stretches across the project site on its 5330 kilometres route from Cooktown to Healesville.

It is likely that West Belconnen will need to include a significant land allocation for district playing fields within the study area. Other areas of sport identified as being in deficit in existing provision are indoor recreation (which could be provided through shared use of school facilities), tennis and squash.

Sporting and Recreation Facilities



- Playing Fields/Ovals**
- 1 Macgregor Neighbourhood Oval
 - 2 Umbagog District Park
 - 3 Fraser Neighbourhood Oval
 - 4 Spence Neighbourhood Oval
 - 5 Charmwood District Playing Fields
 - 6 Charmwood Neighbourhood Oval
 - 7 The Boslem and Harle Park
 - 8 George Simpson Park
 - 9 Melba Neighbourhood Oval
 - 10 Evtatt Neighbourhood Oval
 - 11 Melba District Playing Fields
 - 12 McKellar Neighbourhood Oval
 - 13 Giralang District Playing Fields
 - 14 Holt Neighbourhood Oval
 - 15 Kippax District Playing Fields
 - 16 Scullin Neighbourhood Oval
 - 17 Florey Neighbourhood Oval
 - 18 Margaret Timpson Park
 - 19 John Knight Memorial Park
 - 20 Fern Hill Park
 - 21 Kaleen District Playing Fields
 - 22 Kaleen South Oval
 - 23 Eastern Valley Oval
 - 24 Hawker District Playing Fields
 - 25 Hillview Park
 - 26 Pope Neighbourhood Oval
 - 27 Higgins Neighbourhood Oval
 - 28 Weetangera Neighbourhood Oval
 - 29 Macquarie Neighbourhood Oval
 - 30 Cook Neighbourhood Oval
 - 31 Jamison Enclosed Oval
 - 32 Aranda Districts Playing Fields
 - 33 South West Evtatt Oval
 - 34 Diddams Close Park
 - 35 Kaleen North Oval
 - 36 Hawker Enclosed Oval
 - 37 Latham Neighbourhood Oval
 - 38 Mount Rogers Reserve
- Other Facilities:**
- 39 Parkway Horse Holding Paddocks
 - 40 Belconnen Pony Club
 - 41 Kings Swim Centre
 - 42 Magpies Belconnen Golf Course
 - 43 Kippax Tennis Club
 - 44 Canberra Basketball
 - 45 Belconnen Wests Tennis Club
 - 46 Big Splash Waterpark
 - 47 Canberra International Sports & Aquatic centre
 - 48 Canberra Stadium
 - 49 Australian Institute of Sport
 - 50 Bruce Indoor Stadium

West Belconnen Map Sporting and Recreation Facilities



4.2.8 Existing conditions summary

The comparative community profiles suggest few differences between the Belconnen district population and the ACT. A more mixed housing profile in West Belconnen may provide greater diversity in future population characteristics

Government primary school provision is a key issue for West Belconnen. Existing P-6 schools are identified as being at, or close to, capacity

While there is some general community activity space in the nearby area, it is unlikely to be able to meet the community demands for community centre space generated by West Belconnen

Expansion of existing, or creation of new, emergency services facilities is also a likely future need based on existing provision and capacity

5 Population growth

This section of the Community Plan provides information on the projected population of West Belconnen and the timing of population increase. These figures are based on a series of assumptions (explained below) and will form the basis for assessments of future infrastructure requirements identified in part 3 of this Community Plan.

5.1 Population forecasts for West Belconnen

The table below shows the population of the main service age groups over time for West Belconnen. It is based on the following assumptions:

- » Production of 300 dwellings a year for 42 years (giving a total projected dwellings of 12,600)
- » An estimate of an average of 2.6 people per dwelling
- » Age profile benchmarked against Gungahlin for the first ten years and Belconnen (at year 20)
- » Age profile benchmarked against ACT Government ACT Population Projections at year 25
- » A constant age structure is assumed for year 25 onwards.

| Year | Babies and pre-schoolers (0 to 4) | Primary schoolers (5 to 11) | Secondary schoolers (12 to 17) | Tertiary education and independence (18 to 24) | Young workforce (25 to 34) | Parents and homebuilders (35 to 49) | Older workers and pre-retirees (50 to 59) | Empty nesters and retirees (60 to 69) | Seniors (70 to 84) | Elderly aged (85 and over) | Total |
|---------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|-------|
| Year 5 | 423 | 427 | 266 | 406 | 932 | 909 | 323 | 128 | 52 | 10 | 3874 |
| Year 10 | 675 | 748 | 501 | 1086 | 1793 | 1848 | 579 | 321 | 105 | 22 | 7679 |
| Year 15 | 924 | 1005 | 775 | 1526 | 2329 | 2583 | 1127 | 816 | 421 | 89 | 11594 |
| Year 20 | 1104 | 1268 | 1047 | 1880 | 2624 | 3191 | 1845 | 1536 | 912 | 192 | 15600 |
| Year 25 | 1326 | 1615 | 1336 | 2088 | 3101 | 3978 | 2262 | 2009 | 1482 | 273 | 19469 |
| Year 30 | 1591 | 1933 | 1610 | 2506 | 3721 | 4774 | 2714 | 2410 | 1778 | 328 | 23365 |
| Year 35 | 1856 | 2255 | 1878 | 2924 | 4341 | 5569 | 3167 | 2812 | 2075 | 382 | 27259 |
| Year 42 | 2228 | 2706 | 2254 | 3509 | 5209 | 6683 | 3800 | 3374 | 2490 | 459 | 32711 |

5.2 Timing and staging

The stage 1 subdivision is located adjacent to Stockdill Drive on the eastern boundary of the site. Development will extend westwards in stages. It is anticipated that the construction of the first stage will commence in late 2015, with the first residents moving in during 2016. The commencement date for the development of the NSW land is not yet determined. For efficiency purposes, and to ensure that the development is cohesive, sustainable and demonstrates best practice, it has been proposed that the structure planning process for both NSW and ACT is undertaken simultaneously.



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West Belconnen Community Plan

Part 2 - Creating a socially sustainable community

Client:
Riverview Projects

Date:
17 June 2014

Draft

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Disclaimer:

The development parameters (dwelling numbers, stages etc.) referred to in this report may vary over time. The figures contained herein are estimates; they represent a good approximation of likely development outcomes to a sufficient level of accuracy for the purposes of this report.

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Prepared by | |
| Reviewed by | |
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1 Introduction

This report forms part of the West Belconnen Community Plan. While the first report documented relevant project background and data, this report focuses on a strategy to achieve social sustainability at West Belconnen. It has been prepared to support and inform the master plan for West Belconnen, the rezoning of the site and subsequent development applications.

“Social sustainability is about people’s quality of life, now and in the future. It combines design of the physical environment with a focus on how people live and use a space, relate to each other and function as a community. It is enhanced by development which provides the right infrastructure to support a strong social and cultural life, opportunities for people to get involved, and scope for the place and the community to evolve” (Dickson and Social Life, 2012).

The focus on social sustainability reflects the West Belconnen project vision and objectives and the projects inclusion in the Green Star Communities Pilot. The Land Development Agency (LDA) and Riverview Projects (Riverview) are seeking a six star rating reflecting international best practice. Social sustainability is prominent among the Green Star eligibility criteria and rating credits. The Community Plan provides strategies and actions to ensure that the relevant Green Star criteria are achieved and that social and cultural outcomes are met in a strategic and effective manner. It will be a key tool to ensure that the plans for West Belconnen translate into a real place that is vibrant, liveable and where residents enjoy a high quality of life.

In broad terms, the Community Plan sets out ways to build a strong social fabric in West Belconnen that will continue to develop and evolve. It describes how a strong and socially sustainable community will be created that offers an active and lively neighbourhood life and sense of belonging. It anticipates the likely needs of the future population for community facilities and human services and provides strategies to address those needs. It also identifies the strategies required for ‘community creation’, including the processes, mechanisms and arrangements required to activate public spaces, provide opportunities for residents to participate in community life and build the social networks and support systems required to sustain them.

Given that West Belconnen is in the planning stages, an emphasis on the design of the physical environment is recognised as a major opportunity. The master planning process is seen as a means to influence physical design of the new community and to promote social goals such as physical activity, healthy living, social interaction and community safety. The development of greenfield sites, even ones that constitute the effective continuation or completion of existing urban development, presents a number of both challenges and opportunities. This Community Plan will investigate how master planning for a large land release can be utilised to promote positive community outcomes and specifically how this will be achieved at West Belconnen.

This Community Plan provides a framework for how the planning for West Belconnen can help to create a supportive physical environment and provide the required community facilities in the most effective and timely way possible. While master planning and urban design are important, and a strong physical foundation for new communities is critical, a land use plan alone is not considered enough to ensure positive community benefits are achieved. While design can provide a physical foundation for addressing social issues, it cannot, in itself, enhance social resources and build a sense of community. Leading practice recognises the need to stimulate and support ‘community building’ in new areas, by providing resources and programs for community engagement and involvement, human services, and community development workers, in addition to providing facilities and public spaces for social interaction and community activities.

A key objective of this Community Plan is to enhance the liveability of West Belconnen for its future residents and to ensure West Belconnen contributes positively to its wider area. This development recognises that this development will be an extension of the existing Belconnen suburbs. In this context liveability refers to how easy a place is to use, how well it addresses residents' and the local area's needs, how safe it feels, and how well it fosters a sense of place and a feeling of community by creating a physical and social environment that is inviting, inclusive, welcoming and enjoyable. This Community Plan recognises that community wellbeing is fundamentally affected by the attributes of a place and that the early stages of planning for new communities are critically important and will provide the foundation which will influence the extent to which West Belconnen becomes a liveable and sustainable community into the future.

Importantly, this Community Plan considers the needs and interests of the future population of West Belconnen, as well as the residents of existing West Belconnen suburbs. The Community Plan includes a focus on how the new development at West Belconnen can be integrated with, and linked to (both physically and socially), the existing and established Belconnen communities.

This report, forming part 2 of the Community Plan, includes:

- » A definition of social sustainability
- » An analysis of the main components, or building blocks, of social sustainability and strategies and actions for how they can be applied to West Belconnen
- » Commitments for community building and place making initiatives
- » Other measures to create a socially sustainable community at West Belconnen.

2 Social sustainability

The World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission) in 1987 is generally credited with introducing the concept of sustainable development to international dialogue. This original concept was based on 'three pillars' (the 'triple bottom line' of environment, economics and social) with sustainable development seen as promoting economic growth while maintaining social inclusion and minimising environmental impact. However, since its earliest days, the environmental dimension has dominated not only the sustainability debate but also the development of policy and planning initiatives. While this emphasis is both valid and important, it has meant that we have paid less attention to other aspects of sustainability including the social dimension. Holden (2012:528) observes that "the widespread embrace of sustainability has unseated the prominence of social concerns in development to assert the importance of environmental concerns in their stead."

Increasingly research and practical experience is demonstrating that the physical and social fabric of a community are, in fact, highly interdependent. A challenge is that the planning and development industries have become more competent at delivering the former (the physical) than the latter (the social). Much progress has been made on developing good quality, energy efficient homes and well-designed housing estates. In research undertaken for the Berkeley Group, Professor Tim Dixon and the Social Life organisation¹ identify that the "challenge" now is "to build on this progress and ensure that new housing routinely creates strong communities" (Dixon and Social Life, 2012:9). There is a need to revisit the original concept of sustainability, 're-balance the triple bottom line', and renew our focus on social sustainability as a way to inform how we plan for strong and resilient communities.



Social sustainability matters because people, places and the economy matter as much as environmental issues. If we are going to create sustainable places in our towns and cities then we really do need to 're-balance' the triple bottom line" (Dixon, 2011:15).

One of the recent and clearer conceptualisations of social sustainability has emerged from work undertaken in the UK through a collaboration of the Young Foundation, Social Life, Professor Tim Dixon² and the developer, the Berkeley Group. In a number of joint and individually authored projects, this collective of researchers and funders have created an important new knowledge bank on the contemporary understanding of social sustainability. Social sustainability as defined by this group (Dixon and Social Life, 2012:9) is:

About people's quality of life, now and in the future. It describes the extent to which a neighbourhood supports individual and collective well-being. Social sustainability combines design of the physical environment with a focus on how people live and use space, relate to each other and function as a community. It is enabled by development which provides the right infrastructure to support a strong social and cultural life, opportunities for people to get involved, and scope for the place and the community to evolve.

¹ Social Life is a social enterprise created by the Young Foundation in the UK to advance understanding of the social dimensions of urban development and assist local authorities and developers to consider how the social life of new places can be supported through practical interventions

² The Professorial Chair in Sustainable Futures in the Built Environment at the University of Reading in the UK

Following from this definition, West Belconnen's approach to achieving social sustainability is being guided by the following six key building blocks:

- » Layout and design – the master planning and urban design stage of developing new communities which lays the physical foundation for integrating social elements
- » Gathering places and amenity – the places and spaces that enable social interaction and provide a physical space for community gathering
- » Supporting infrastructure – the transport services and community facilities, services, activities and programs that address local community needs and promote community health and wellbeing
- » Social and cultural life – community and cultural events and activities (both formal and informal) that allow people to come together and celebrate their community
- » Voice, influence and participation – the processes of engagement, leadership, governance and stewardship that foster involvement and ownership in communities
- » Flexibility, adaptability and incrementalism –promoting some degree of 'incompleteness' in the planning of new suburbs that enables communities to evolve, and allows for residents to be involved in the planning and development of their community.

These building blocks, and some of the key elements within them, are represented in the diagram below.



The following sections of this report explores each of these social sustainability building blocks in more detail and identifies how they can be applied in practical ways to West Belconnen.



A socially sustainable community is a place where people belong, are valued and can participate. (From participants at the West Belconnen Planning and Design Forum – community building and placemaking session, November, 2013)



West Belconnen Planning and Design Forum, Community Building and Placemaking Session, November 2013, Photo: Elton Consulting

3 Layout and design

The potential of the urban environment to produce either social benefits or costs is well recognised. It is now standard practice for urban planning and design to consider the impacts of the built environment on a wide range of social issues including physical activity, accessibility, social isolation, feelings of safety, general health and wellbeing and the feeling of belonging that is often termed sense of community. An understanding of the potential social impacts (both positive and negative) of urban design provides an important opportunity when planning new communities like West Belconnen.

Planning for positive and enduring social benefits needs to start early and be considered as a core objective of the initial concept development and master planning of any significant land development project. There are a number of social planning frameworks that can be used to inform the design and planning of new areas like West Belconnen. These include: child friendliness, physical activity, communities for lifetime, universal design and safety by design as well as more specific policies like the ACT Government's recently released framework to combat obesity. Although each has its own focus, they are useful references to guide the urban design and physical planning process.

The urban planning and design elements of these frameworks provide an important physical foundation for social sustainability. Design features such as defined activity centres, local destinations, walking and cycling friendliness, quality streetscapes, spaces for gatherings and exercise, continuous paths of travel, etc. all add to general social health and wellbeing. However, as highlighted in the review of the English New Towns (Stott et al, 2009), design alone is a necessary but not sufficient contributor to the development of a socially sustainable community. There are limits to the social sustainability benefits that the physical environment can achieve and a holistic view of social sustainability and sustainability more broadly, also requires consideration of non-physical components of developing new suburbs.

An important consideration, in encouraging socially sustainable communities at the planning and design stage, is the impact of housing markets and land use policies on different socio-economic groups and the extent to which the planning of a new area may promote social inclusion and cohesion or exacerbate socio-economic divisions. New development like West Belconnen is an opportunity to create communities where people have a range of incomes, backgrounds and demographic characteristics, and where concentration of social disadvantage or isolation of vulnerable groups is minimised. Providing fair and equitable access to the community's resources is a further way of promoting inclusive and harmonious development and creating socially sustainable new suburbs.

A development of the size of West Belconnen is an opportunity to provide a mix of housing types to cater for a diverse and evolving population. Importantly, West Belconnen must also be viewed in the context of its location as part of the wider Belconnen area. Connections to the established Belconnen suburbs must be physical but also need to be social particularly in terms of relationships with community service providers, community groups, businesses and residents.

What does this mean for West Belconnen?

In considering how these different social planning frameworks can influence the planning and design of West Belconnen, a number of common features can be identified. These include:

- » West Belconnen will be planned around defined centres that provide a focal point for community activity
- » Walking and cycling routes including route continuity, accessible paths of travel, linking to local destinations and focal points, and providing safe and convenient non-automobile travel including use of transmission line easements for increased connectivity
- » Quality streetscapes and 'people streets' including traffic calming, pedestrian operated lights, clearly marked crossings and landscaping including street trees, furniture and gathering places
- » Open space including providing pleasant places for people to sit, meet and talk, connected to walking and cycling routes in the broader network, recreation opportunities for children, youth and older people, community gardens and other communal spaces including utilising the river corridor for appropriately planned recreation activities
- » Public transport including access to bus service within walking distance for most residents, clearly signed, well lit and direct routes for people walking and cycling, clear crossing points, adequate lighting and surveillance for night time use
- » The provision of a range of housing types that are more likely to attract a more balanced and diverse community structure including affordable housing and housing suitable for older people, single person households, families, people with disabilities, and a range of socio-economic levels
- » Safety and wellbeing including design measures to enhance community safety and reduce crime including encouraging activity to enhance natural surveillance
- » West Belconnen to be designed to be accessible to all, inclusive of age, culture, socio-economic status and mobility
- » Opportunities for good health and mental stimulation including strategies to encourage physical activity and allowances for places for conversation and contemplation
- » Civic, community, cultural, religious and recreational spaces and activities provided to meet the needs of a diverse range of households
- » Fostering community spirit at West Belconnen through engaging community members early in the process, incorporate high quality community art programs, design places to accommodate community events and cultural development.

4 Gathering places and amenity

Providing quality public space is seen as one way to help to promote the social interaction and bonds of trust that are thought to be fundamental to a strong community. Social gathering and interaction are critical to the establishment of a sense of community, identity and place. Without social interaction, people living in an area are merely a group of individuals living separate lives, with little sense of community, pride or attachment.

While formal social infrastructure like community centres, libraries and structured community services are essential, many people do not use formal centres and services regularly. Public places that foster meetings, both planned and incidental, provide a physical space for the ties and relationships that form community. The full range of constituent parts that make a vibrant and viable place need to be considered in concert. These include streets, public spaces, shops, businesses, housing, community facilities, transport including pedestrian, cycling, bus and car; with these physical elements viewed through the lens of understanding how diverse groups of people (children, young people, families, older people) will use, interact, access and move between these different functions and places.

Discussion about West Belconnen has included a focus on the importance of streets and street life to the formation of community. Streets and other public spaces are considered to be the stage upon which the act of creating community takes place. Adding to our understanding of the social value of public space, the US urban sociologist, Ray Oldenburg described the importance of 'third places' in creating a sense of community and identity (Oldenburg, 1999). Oldenburg wrote of the "public places on neutral ground where people can gather and interact." Unlike home (the 'first place') and work (the 'second'), 'third places' allow people to put aside their concerns and simply enjoy the company and conversation around them. These are the places of "regular, voluntary, informal, and happily anticipated gatherings of individuals beyond the realms of home and work." A 'third place' is inclusive, local and helps to bring people in neighbourhoods together.

Public spaces and amenity are essential in creating a feeling of place and identity in new areas. A common criticism of traditional estate development is that it lacks a 'heart' and 'character'. New estates need some form of centre or focal point for community activity. Whether that focus is retail, leisure or education, some form of centre is important to establishing identity and providing the type of vibrancy and social activity that is synonymous with genuine community. New suburban centres have to try harder to activate spaces and achieve vibrancy with fewer people. It is important to consider a range of approaches to encourage people to linger longer. While being key places for accessing shops, community facilities and services, ideally centres will also provide some space that encourages people to slow down and spend some time.

One way to think about attracting people to public space and encouraging them to stay longer is the 'power of 10'. The 'power of 10' is an idea promoted by the Project for Public Spaces (PPS). The essence of the 'power of 10' is a simple one that is not intended to be taken too literally but acts more as guideline or goal. Basically it says that for a place to work as an attractor for a range of people, and to be engaging and interesting, there needs to be ten reasons for people to go there or ten activities to undertake while there. The 'power of 10' idea encourages thinking beyond the physical and design elements of a place, to also consider what social initiatives (such as places to sit and talk, outdoor cinema, markets, a playground, kiosk or café, chalk festivals, musical and cultural events, etc.) can act as attractors and contribute to the vitality and vibrancy of public space. While the genesis of many of these 'placemaking' ideas is urban in origin, their application should not be restricted to that setting and should apply equally to new greenfield environments. While some of this power of 10 will come from design (and good people-centred design is critical to successful public spaces), design alone is unlikely to achieve the desired

outcomes. Fred Kent, the Director of the PPS, commenting in 2013, stated that 90% of the success of public space is about its management. While design is important, the management and programming of a space can significantly contribute to good community outcomes.

While business, community, leisure, and recreation attractors will always be critical in attracting people to centres in new areas, the quality of the experience there (the public space, streetscape, pedestrian friendliness, places to sit, people watching opportunities, safety, retail offer, comfort, conviviality, etc.) will influence people's desire to visit and the amount of time that they will spend there. While much of the planning for new centres is retail driven, in new areas (many of which have a focus on affordable family lifestyles) it is important to integrate 'places where you can spend time, but don't have to spend money'. Those places, the 'third places', contribute significantly to the creation of a sense of place within new estates.

Neighbourhood and local centres can function effectively as meeting places for the community and become hubs for both planned and incidental community activity, social interaction and celebrations. Recent trends have seen the return of the 'main street' to retail development and recognition of the importance of human scale, pedestrian activity and the economic and social benefits that can bring. All the constituent parts that make a vibrant and viable centre need to be considered in concert. These include streets, public spaces, shops, businesses, housing, community facilities, transport including pedestrian, cycling, bus and car; with these physical elements viewed with an understanding of how diverse groups of residents will use these spaces and places.

Valuing and enhancing the pedestrian experience is fundamental to quality centres that work for a diverse range of people. Centres are places of commerce but are also important for other forms of exchange, particularly the interactions between people that take place within the public environment of a neighbourhood or local centre. These commercial and people priorities are in no way exclusive but can in fact be highly compatible and mutually reinforcing. Safe, high quality street environments and interesting building facades that provide shelter and an interesting pedestrian experience attract people and business activity. When coupling public spaces that encourage social interaction and an interesting, supportive pedestrian environment that encourages walking, a vibrant and viable environment for both people and business is possible.

Critical to the overall success of a centre or centres in West Belconnen will be the relationship between public and private space. The quality of the public domain, such as parks, squares and plazas, and how they interact with shops, businesses and housing is a relationship that can help to reinforce the social value of a neighbourhood or local centre. As an example, places where parents can sit, relax and perhaps have a coffee in a space that is adjacent to, and overlooks, play space for children invites people to sit and enjoy the space, knowing their children are supervised and safe – all in an environment that their parents can also relax in and enjoy. The image following shows a simple example of this and also highlights that this relationship can work in a relatively low key and inexpensive way and does not necessarily require extensive infrastructure or landscape finishes to make it work. It does, however, require consideration of the relationships and interactions between different types of spaces in the early phase of centre design.



Central Park, Austin, Texas: Photo: Elton Consulting

The main centre in West Belconnen should be viewed as a destination. It should be a stimulating and engaging place that attracts both local residents as well as residents from the wider Belconnen region. Larger centres particularly have the capacity to host a diverse range of activities and events. While much of this will be retail based, it will also be important in West Belconnen that there is a focus on affordable family lifestyles. The Planning and Design Forum session raised the importance of planning for those 'places where you can spend time, but don't have to spend

money'. Those places (forms of the 'third places') contribute significantly to the creation of a sense of place within a new centre. These spaces include plazas, squares, parks, 'village greens' and play areas as well as buildings including community centres and libraries. While there is an inevitable tension between making 'valuable' potentially commercial space within a centre available for community use, a number of recent examples show how this can be done successfully and how the presence of non-retail space can add to the vibrancy and vitality of a centre and act as an attractor for people to the centre. The Rouse Hill Town Centre in western Sydney is an example of a main street model of commercial centre that includes a community centre and library facility in its heart, with direct access to the central town square.



Rouse Hill Town Centre, Photo: Elton Consulting

Ideally the centre in West Belconnen will provide some space that encourages people to slow down and spend some time. In West Belconnen there may not be the volume of pedestrian traffic of more urbanised and densely populated areas closer to, or in, central Canberra. What could, however, make a difference in West Belconnen is the amount and quality of time people spend in the centre, particularly its public spaces, rather than the quantity of people that pass through it. As Jan Gehl (2010:71), has commented 'how many' is an issue but 'how long' is also important:

Many people moving quickly through a space can result in considerably less life in the city than a handful of people who spend time there.

Capturing many of the points made here, the Project for Public Spaces (PPS)³ have developed a placemaking framework for 'what makes a good place'. In further development of a model or framework for centres within West Belconnen, the PPS framework may provide some guidance. A diagrammatic representation of the model is shown on the following page. It is based on four key attributes of place:

» Sociability

³ Project for Public Spaces, www.pps.org

- » Uses and activities
- » Comfort and image
- » Access and linkages.

What makes a good place, Project for Public Spaces



The diagram shows the four key attributes that contribute to 'place' (sociability, uses and activities, comfort and image, access and linkages), the important but often intangible features that help to create those attributes (including fun, neighbourly, readable, and welcoming) and some of the data that can be used to measure progress (including number of women, children and elderly, local business ownership, and pedestrian activity). This concept of what makes a good place may help to inform thinking about what will make good centres in West Belconnen and although it should not be applied uncritically, it could provide some ideas that could be adapted to suit the specific circumstances of this unique location.

Placemaking

Much of what is discussed here, could broadly be termed placemaking. Placemaking involves the creation of places that have meaning to people, that promote community use and interaction and that foster genuine local identity. Placemaking brings together a range of disciplines including urban design, community and cultural development, economic development and community engagement. It bridges across these disciplines to create a focus on the specific qualities of a place that lead to a sense of identity and an authentic feeling of community.

While we cannot immediately recreate Melbourne's laneways in West Belconnen, we do need to understand what place means in this more suburban setting. It will be important to determine what design elements, initiatives, programs and activities can be introduced to create and reinforce a sense of place in West Belconnen and how it will evolve as a vibrant and liveable community, different from its neighbours, but linked to them and its own equally strong sense of place and community.

What does this mean for West Belconnen?

The implications for West Belconnen, which is likely to include one retail centre and several smaller 'village' centres which focus more on parks and community facilities rather than retail, is set out below:

- » Planning streets and streetscapes to encourage social interaction and street life with the streets of West Belconnen seen as an important part of the public domain
- » In planning centres for West Belconnen think of how concepts such as 'the power of 10' and 'what makes a good place' can inform planning, design and management
- » Ensure centres in West Belconnen are planned to function as community meeting places that encourage planned and incidental community activity, social interaction and community events and celebrations
- » Prioritising walkability and the pedestrian experience in planning streets and centres
- » Carefully considering the relationship between public and private space and how parks, squares and plazas interact and integrate with shops, businesses and housing
- » Recognise that good planning and design provides a critical foundation but for best outcomes consideration must also be given to programming and management.

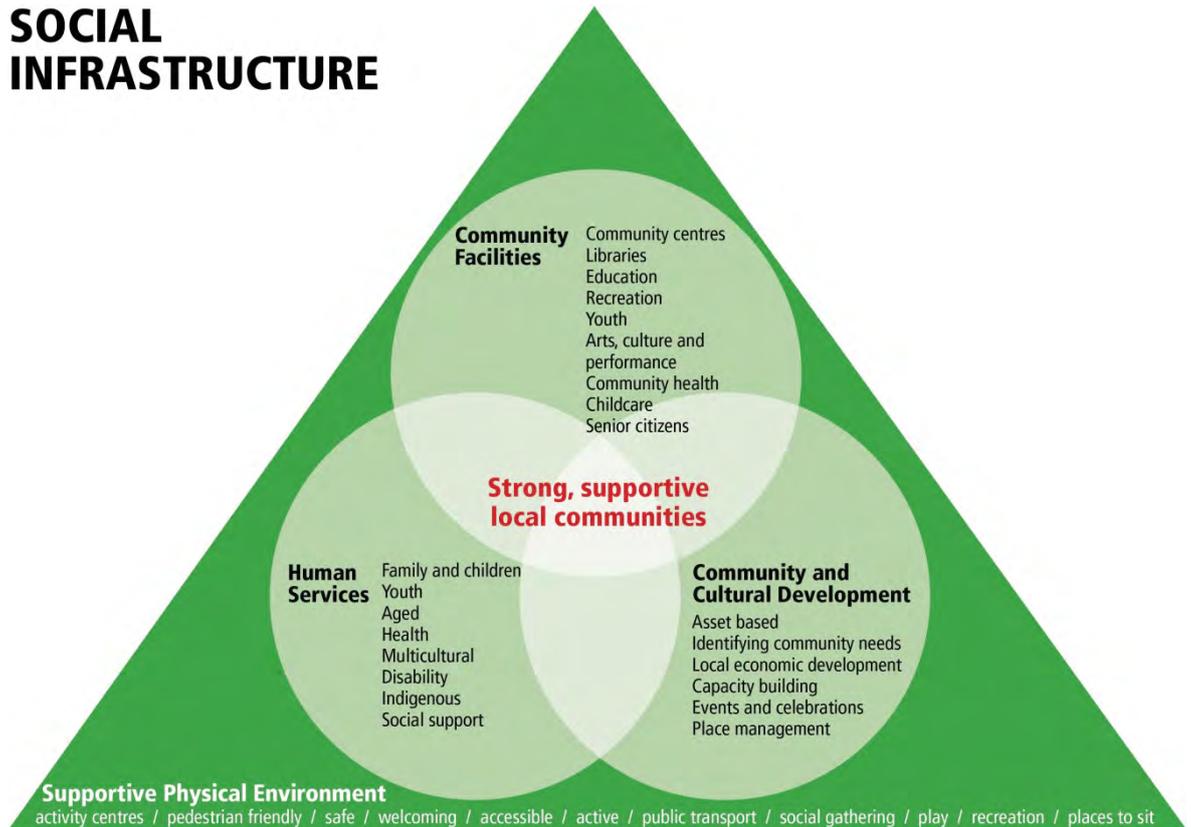
5 Supporting infrastructure

While a project the scale of West Belconnen requires a significant array of infrastructure to supports its development, the emphasis on social sustainability here means we will mainly focus on social infrastructure and other infrastructure that has significant social impacts such as transport.

The following diagram represents a definition of social infrastructure. The key elements of the diagram include:

- » A supportive physical environment – following from the discussion about layout and design, this definition of social infrastructure emphasises that for best community outcomes, social infrastructure must be located or delivered within a supportive physical environment. Characteristics of that environment include safe, welcoming, accessible, active, etc.
- » The circles in the diagram represent what can be considered to be the three interdependent elements that make up social infrastructure. They are:
 - > Community facilities – the buildings and spaces that provide the physical space for a range of informal and formal activities, programs and services to occur and that cater for a wide range of community members’ needs and interests
 - > Human services – the programs and services that provide direct services to residents and are funded to operate out of community facilities and other places
 - > Community and cultural development – the activities and events that bring people in a community together to work together and celebrate their place.

SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE



Graphic by Elton Consulting

The contribution of social infrastructure to the creation of places is summed up by the Growth Areas Authority and Department of Planning and Community Development (2008) in their guide for community infrastructure in Victoria's growth areas:

From an urban planning perspective, neighbourhoods are planned around their community infrastructure nodes and hubs – the community goes to these nodes to work, shop, learn, play and socialise. The way the nodes look and function contributes to the neighbourhood and overall community sense of place, pride and connection. The design and components of community buildings and open space areas help to define the community's character and reflects an area's character and identity. The services and activities that are available in these nodes also contribute to the community's level of health and sense of wellbeing.

Getting this right provides an important physical foundation within which social infrastructure and other facilities and amenities can be integrated and consequently have the potential to provide opportunities for maximum community benefit. The physical planning process should also consider, from the earliest possible time, community facility needs, and the type, size, model and location of community facility space. A robust process of social infrastructure planning is required, part of which includes consideration and application of key location principles that include:

- » Main street presence with maximum visibility
- » Clustered with other activity generating facilities
- » Proximity to open space
- » Centrality to catchment
- » Accessibility to public transport

- » Connection to pedestrian and cycling networks
- » Capacity for adaptation.

Early provision

Discussion at the West Belconnen Planning and Design Forum included a conversation about how quickly new residents' habits are formed once they move into a new area. This is a critical consideration in the timely provision of a range of supporting infrastructure. In the context of West Belconnen this is particularly relevant for key issues such as access and connectivity. The early availability of public transport (in this case bus service) to connect people to key areas such as Kippax, Belconnen Town Centre and Civic are important considerations. A lack of public transport at early stages of a development means that residents habits form around driving. Once those habits are formed it is thought that they are hard to modify, even when other transport options do become available.

The Young Foundation's (Woodcraft et al, 2012:26) research on new communities found that:

A lack of social infrastructure to support new residents when they arrive slows the process of building a community and can create long term problems for the wellbeing and opportunities of new arrivals.

Schools and child care facilities are a critical form of social infrastructure in new communities and can play a significant role in reinforcing the liveability and establishing the identity of new places. The Young Foundation (Woodcraft et al, 2012:28) write:

As well as attracting families to settle in new places, schools and nurseries create opportunities for people from different backgrounds to meet other parents and build relationships. Early provision of good quality schools and nurseries will encourage more affluent families to use community services and not seek out school places in neighbouring areas, which can create long term issues with the reputation of local schools. Schools can also provide a hub for community services or community groups, either in the short term while other facilities are being developed; or long term by co-locating with children's centres, community health workers or youth workers in the buildings.

Initial discussions with ACT Department of Education and Training have indicated that there is currently some limited primary school capacity in the area with this expected to change as the population ages and changes. Opportunities for the early provision of school facilities at West Belconnen will be an important consideration of the ongoing planning and negotiation about public infrastructure with the ACT Government.

Early provision also relates to key human services, social support and community development services that are important in influencing new residents' experience and perception of West Belconnen as a viable and liveable community. This Community Plan defines liveability as how easy a place is to use, how well it addresses residents' and the local area's needs, how safe it feels, and how well it fosters a sense of place and a feeling of community by creating a physical and social environment that is inviting, inclusive, welcoming and enjoyable.

Use of environmental areas

While not a traditional form of social infrastructure, West Belconnen provides an opportunity for creative use of environmental areas for compatible amenities and recreational uses. There are opportunities for a range of active recreational uses that can help to further promote the active and healthy living agenda. Possible uses include jogging and hiking trails, mountain biking, possibly a zip line and other 'adventure' type activities which could be accommodated within the river corridor. While environmental sensitivities would need to be carefully addressed, these types of uses could help to create a unique destination at West Belconnen.

What does this mean for West Belconnen?

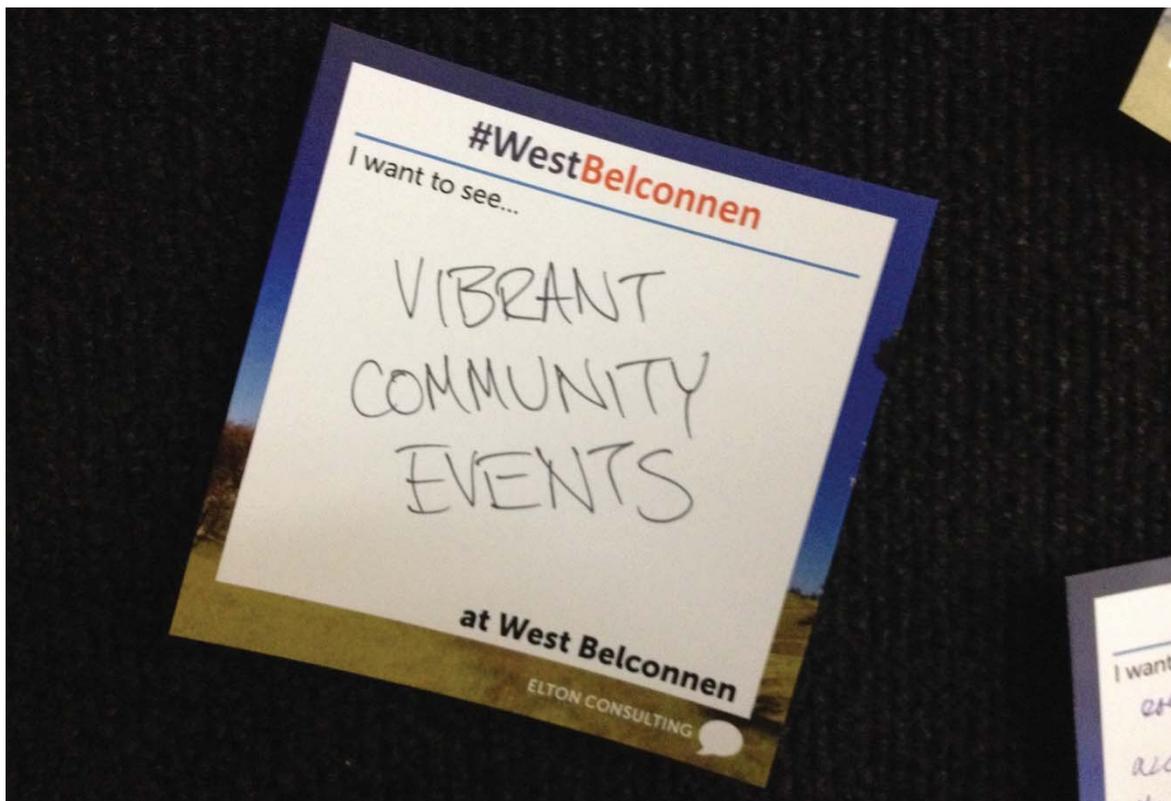
For West Belconnen this means consideration of the provision of amenities and social infrastructure to stimulate a real sense of community including:

- » Early provision of transport and communications services
- » Early provision of key social infrastructure such as schools
- » Master planning that integrates key social infrastructure and amenities into the urban fabric
- » Planning for the provision of 'early attractors' that could include key amenities such as parks and other forms of public gathering places, community facilities and meeting spaces with, at least, some of these provided at West Belconnen during stage one
- » Consideration of active recreational uses and similar amenities within the river corridor.

6 Social and cultural life

Good relationships between people and a range of local activities both formal and informal are seen to be key to thriving communities. 'Shared emotional connections' fostered by participation in community and cultural activities that allow people to come together and celebrate their place has been identified as one of the key elements of a 'sense of community' according to seminal research by McMillan and Chavis (1986). Community events such as festivals, street parties, community barbecues, food fairs, outdoor cinema, neighbourhood Olympics, chalk art festivals and similar events can help people to get to know each other and celebrate their community. For community development programs in new areas it is important to ensure community members are involved in planning events and activities, rather than just being passive 'recipients' or 'consumers'. Beatley (2004) writes of the importance of engaging community members in community events:

Community events can help to bring people and neighbourhoods closer together, help develop lasting community relationships, and build commitments to place. We need more community events that rally people together that call upon them to demonstrate (physically) their bonds to one another and to the community as a whole.



Community Workshop Ideas Wall, 11 November, 2013, Photo: Elton Consulting

Consultation for a variety of projects, including community development projects in Canberra, reveals a genuine appetite among residents for traditional notions of neighbourhood, belonging and community. In feedback from participants at the West Belconnen Community Workshop (November 2013), a number of participants made community-themed responses to questions about their vision for West Belconnen. Responses included:

- » Encourage a sense of identity and belonging that supports a purpose and meaning that is shared
- » Find ways for the community to develop a sense of 'us', 'we belong'
- » Community and social spaces
- » Sporting, community and social infrastructure that joins young and older people
- » Spaces and places for shopping, education, leisure, food production, eating and work
- » An accessible community that enables people with disability to participate in all aspects of community life
- » The wellbeing of the people – services for young people, parents, working professionals, retirees, and early childhood
- » Shared open spaces to gather, work and play
- » Social needs – more services.

The Young Foundation (Woodcraft et al, 2012:34) conducted extensive research to understand what makes people feel like they belong and identified the following:

- » Informal but strong ties of family and friendship
- » Weaker, but still important, ties of association that bind people together in churches, clubs and voluntary bodies where they find connection and common purpose
- » Positive messages from the local economy that offer entry level jobs as well as opportunities for advancement
- » A political system where key roles are shared by people who people can identify with, share values and encourage feelings of belonging
- » Messages from the broader culture and community that reinforce a sense of belonging
- » Perceived and actual levels of community safety
- » The design and quality of the physical environment including the provision of homes that are suitable for peoples' needs
- » The provision of public services including schools, health care, policing, etc.

Urban design and physical infrastructure of West Belconnen will lay an important physical foundation for the development of a community, this Community Plan emphasises that design and hard infrastructure alone will be insufficient to create a real sense of community and identity in this new development setting. As reinforced by the Young Foundation (Woodcraft et al, 2012:27):

Planning for the hard infrastructure alone would never build a community and that it would only be done by a matrix of formal and informal opportunities or supported activities. There was a strong imperative for designing facilitated activities to meet the needs of future citizens and their households if they were to take part in, and join together with, other households to build a strong and cohesive community or indeed different communities.

As previously noted, the success of public space and its capacity to contribute to a sense of community is as much about programming and activation strategies as it is about design. That programming requires active management which could fall under the role of a Community Development Worker or Place Manager.

6.1 Community Development

There are various ways of building social capital and encouraging this feeling of belonging in new communities. The UK Department for Communities and Local Government (2006:46), in a review of New Towns, recommended “community development workers; a ‘community chest’ for funding small scale community projects; working with the community and voluntary sector; working with church and faith groups; providing resources in terms of buildings, computers, etc.” The review of New Towns by Stott et al (2009:44) also highlighted “the critical role played by community development staff in creating cohesive communities that are vibrant, engaged and empowered”.

Community development workers have an important role to play in new communities by working with new residents to assist them to come together, to interact and to share in the social and cultural life of their new community. Community development workers also play an important catalyst role in facilitating the development of the social and cultural life of a new community through organising and encouraging participation in a range of activities, events and programs. Despite, and in some cases because of, the fast paced technology driven society that embodies 21st century Australian lifestyles, there remains a genuine appetite for traditional notions of neighbourhood, belonging and community. A range of social research suggests that people value feeling that they belong, living in communities they perceive as safe and friendly, and (without necessarily being in ‘each others’ pockets’) knowing their neighbours and other community members. Good relationships between people and a range of local activities both formal and informal are seen to be key to thriving communities.

What is important is that the resources and support to encourage community building are available in new communities. There is a fine line between facilitating community development activities to make it easier for resident participation, and taking too much responsibility for organising and facilitating activities. Opportunities for community building and the creation of social capital do not always happen automatically in new communities and do need to be stimulated. The danger is that too much stimulation can lead to a feeling that ‘community’ is being manipulated or contrived. There is a balance to be struck between leaving residents without resources to undertake community building activities and controlling those activities to the extent that residents become passive observers and community building is undermined.

Community development plan

Place-making strategies can help create active public spaces that provide a sense of vitality, identity and civic pride associated with notions of community well-being. But beyond the ‘buzz’ and lifestyle factors of enjoying active and vibrant places that amuse and entertain, they do not necessarily build the social relationships, networks, support mechanisms or social capital required to create a strong, resilient and truly sustainable community. This will be the focus of a community development strategy for West Belconnen. Elements of community development and place-making will overlap and complement each other.

A well resourced community development plan will develop activities, programs, services and voluntary organisations to support community building and ensure that the community facilities are focal points for the whole community. The aims of a community development plan for West Belconnen include:

- » Encourage new residents to feel a part of the community and become involved in community life
- » Provide opportunities for social interaction and the development of social networks within the community
- » Support the establishment and growth of community initiatives, interest groups and community organisations in the community

- » Provide opportunities for people to become involved and participate in community building events
- » Promote identity and sense of place through community and cultural development activities and strategies
- » Provide a range of activities and programs that meet the social, leisure, learning and recreational needs of residents
- » Develop strategies which assist the new community to integrate with the surrounding existing wider Belconnen communities
- » Ensure there is equal opportunity for all groups within the community to become involved, including people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, younger people and older people
- » Develop processes and structures for residents to participate in the on-going planning and development of West Belconnen
- » Develop programs to inform and educate residents and to promote sustainable practices
- » Complement existing services and contribute to an effective network of community resources
- » Build capacity among residents and resident groups to ensure that community engagement initiatives are sustainable
- » Develop an evaluation strategy to monitor community and stakeholder involvement
- » Develop an 'exit strategy' to ensure that community development initiatives are sustainable and activities, groups, programs and events can sustain themselves in the long term
- » Help to position West Belconnen as leading practice in community engagement and development.

To ensure that community development processes respond to the needs and interests of residents and those in surrounding areas, and engender a sense of ownership and commitment amongst them, it is proposed that the design and implementation of the strategy will involve residents themselves. A more detailed community development plan will be developed in subsequent stages of planning, with an initial focus on the first stage of the West Belconnen development.

Components of the community development plan are likely to include the following:

Community Development Worker

A key element of this strategy is the employment of a Community Development Worker who will resource and support community development and engagement activities at West Belconnen. There are a number of options for the employment of the worker including directly by Riverview Projects or the LDA or on a consultancy basis.

The Community Development Worker would be responsible for the following:

- » Work with local residents to promote their integration into the West Belconnen community and the wider community of Belconnen
- » Identify emerging needs and work with residents to address those needs
- » Monitor the profile and characteristics of the incoming population, and seek to ensure programs and services are responsive to emerging community needs and interests
- » Monitor and report to Riverview Projects (Riverview) and LDA on the movement of households into West Belconnen

- » Implement programs to welcome new residents, provide them with information and put them in touch with others
- » Be responsible for the on ground delivery of a Welcome Program to new residents and households
- » Establish programs and activities to foster social interaction and networks among residents. The nature of these will respond to the expressed interests of residents
- » Support the establishment of new community groups and provide support to existing groups
- » Link residents with services and facilities in the wider Belconnen area
- » Support and assist the administration of processes for residents to participate in decision-making about the on-going planning and development of West Belconnen
- » Support initiatives of residents that will contribute to the identity and social capital of the community
- » Work with residents and Riverview /LDA to organise community building events
- » Assist with appropriate marketing strategies and the development of new resources to promote West Belconnen programs and activities
- » Incorporate sustainability education into the community development program
- » Assist with the production and distribution of regular newsletters to residents highlighting information such as calendar of events, introductions/profiles of new residents, community contacts, development updates, articles of interest, details of local interest/community groups, and local business directories
- » Assist with the production and distribution of flyers and other promotional material to advertise local community activities and events
- » Work with local community organisations and ACT Government agencies to ensure the needs of West Belconnen residents are addressed and linkages established with programs and services in adjoining areas
- » Act as a broker to engage other delivery partners to participate in specific events or activities
- » Assist with submission, tender and grant application preparation on behalf of the residents of West Belconnen
- » Identify long term funding sources for community development activities at West Belconnen. Be proactive and forward thinking in the development of an appropriate and sustainable exit strategy to ensure the sustainability of community development activities beyond the initial funding period
- » Provide regular reports to Riverview /LDA
- » Attend project meetings as required.

Community development program

Taking the LDA's existing Mingle community development program as a guide, a community development program at West Belconnen will consist of the following key elements:

- » Community events including outdoor cinema, Christmas Carols, fun fairs and food festivals
- » Community development events and activities including smaller scale events (such as neighbourhood barbecues), seminars/classes (which could include sustainable living, growing

- your own food, interior design), groups (including recreational walking groups, running groups, book club and neighbourhood watch) and other activities especially utilising the river corridor
- » Welcome Program including welcome kit, welcome nights (to encourage sense of belonging and introduce residents to local resources) as well as a range of information on living in West Belconnen including information on opportunities for stewardship of the river corridor
 - » Information/communications including a web page, email list, Facebook and a range of newsletters and noticeboard to not only promote community activities but to facilitate information exchange on a range of issues such as trade recommendations, car pooling and tool sharing
 - » Community engagement/participation including ongoing engagement on the evolving plans for West Belconnen as well as establishing resident groups and similar forums for community involvement
 - » Promotion and involvement in existing programs and activities at existing facilities such as Strathnairn
 - » Activities, programs and events to activate and utilise key places in West Belconnen such as Strathnairn and the Belconnen Farm Heritage Precinct
 - » Community education and environment programs particularly to help residents understand their roles and responsibilities and the opportunities provided by living in proximity to the river corridor and also in relation to the site's cultural heritage
 - » Establishment of a range of community groups such as Bush on the Boundary to engage residents in conservation and corridor management activities
 - » Other initiatives including community initiatives fund (to seed fund community activities), tool library and other cooperative ventures.

A key focus of the community development program will be sustainability education. This could include:

- » Development of homeowners' sustainability handbook for inclusion with welcome kit. This will promote understanding and use of sustainability features of housing and site as well as providing information on unique natural features of the site including the river corridor
- » Planting, weeding, landcare and landscape restoration projects as opportunities for residents to become involved in community projects
- » On-site nursery for production and storage of plants that has educational, training and community participation elements
- » Environmental education opportunities associated with the river corridor and woodland areas
- » Community garden program as a community enterprise for local food production and opportunity for social interaction and cultural expression.

Partnerships with local organisations

One of the key issues in the planning of West Belconnen is the integration of the new with the existing, established communities. Physical planning, including roadways, pedestrian and cycle links, as well as the type and location of social infrastructure, will be critical in ensuring strong links between the new community of West Belconnen and the existing surrounding suburbs. However, equally important are the social and cultural connections between new and existing communities.

Community building initiatives should encourage integration by focussing on both the existing and the new community. Strategic partnerships with key local organisations, such as Uniting Care Kippax, will be critical to community development initiatives that link the new West Belconnen with the existing. Organisations such as Uniting Care and Belconnen Community Services are uniquely placed to extend community services and activities that currently exist into the new community and facilitate access to services and activities for new residents. Strathnairn is another important existing facility and community resource that could become an important community asset for West Belconnen residents.

Community engagement

A community and stakeholder engagement strategy is currently being implemented by Riverview Projects and the LDA. This strategy will evolve to cover not only the planning stages of the development but also the subsequent staged construction of West Belconnen. This will ensure the incoming residents, people living in the surrounding district and wider Belconnen area and other stakeholders are provided with:

- » Clear and accurate information on the ongoing planning and development of West Belconnen
- » Mechanisms for providing meaningful input to the planning and development of West Belconnen.

It is envisaged that the engagement program will be integrated into the broader community development program of community activities and events. Key aspects of the program will include:

- » Information updates via regular newsletters, media articles and social media
- » Community and stakeholder consultation around planning milestones and the rolling program of DAs as required
- » Ongoing community liaison and communication, including mechanism for community members to raise any specific development related issues
- » Outcomes reported via a series of consultation reports and triple bottom line reporting.

Key community development lessons

Community development experience in new suburban development projects in Australia provides a number of lessons that are important to consider:

- » Involve people early - Involving residents as early as possible in the community development process has been shown to be important to sustained community building in new suburbs. This includes working with people even before they have moved into the new development if possible
- » Encourage residents to play an active role - For real community development to occur, residents of new suburbs will need to be more than just passive 'recipients' or 'consumers' of events and activities. Residents need to play an active role in planning, organising and delivering community activities and events. Community development needs to be done 'with' and 'by' residents rather than 'to' them
- » Cultivate local champions - While the role of community development workers and other professionals is important to successful community development programs, real and sustainable change requires the participation of local people who are prepared and able to step up and play some form of leadership role in their local communities. An important role for community development programs is to assist with identifying these potential local 'champions' and providing them with the necessary support and resources they require
- » Provide a range of opportunities for people to participate - Although there may be a genuine willingness by a number of (not all) residents to participate in neighbourhood activities, the realities of contemporary lifestyles mean that many people have little spare time beyond their work and home lives. Community development programs need to respond to this reality and ensure that there are a variety of events, activities and programs that offer a range of ways for people to be involved should they choose to. Events and activities of varying scales, types and focus should also be planned
- » Maintain momentum and capitalise on enthusiasm - We have found a widespread and genuine appetite among residents (new and prospective) for community development activities and a real interest for living in a place with a strong sense of community. The initial engagement process to support the production of a community development strategy can generate a substantial amount of enthusiasm for community activities. There is no greater asset in community development programs than the energy and interest of local residents. However, that enthusiasm can quickly wane if not responded to
- » Work with a strong delivery partner within a clearly defined project management regime - A well-managed community based organisation with local contacts and networks is, in our view, best placed to provide that service in a way that will also be sustainable into the future

- » Use new technologies to foster communication and engagement - Information is critical to the shared experiences, collective understandings and networks that make up a community. Communication technologies can add significant value to a community development program. While social media, and other related forms of communication, should not be seen as a replacement for actual community engagement and involvement, it would be a missed opportunity not to see social media as an important additional tool for community building
- » Link with key themes and priorities - A comprehensive community development program provides a number of important opportunities to raise awareness of key issues and priorities. Events like neighbourhood festivals or fairs can be 'themed' to an extent to incorporate awareness raising and public education initiatives on issues such as environmental awareness and conservation, sustainability, climate change, cultural diversity and social inclusion, innovation and technology and health and wellbeing
- » Create a physical base for community development activities - The expeditious delivery of a community facility, even if it is an interim one, is important to the success of a community development program and this should be a key consideration for new suburban development. Early planning for community use of other facilities is another option. Possibilities could include shared use of other facilities such as schools as well as initiatives such as the use of a house for community activities.

What does this mean for West Belconnen?

For West Belconnen, stimulation of a vibrant social and cultural life as a key element of 'place', could include:

- » Neighbourhood based design that engenders a feeling of ownership and identification and promotes opportunities for casual but regular interaction with others within that area
- » Flexible open spaces that evolve over time to suit changing population needs and preferences
- » Development of a detailed Community Development Plan (with existing and prospective resident input) and engagement of a Community Development Worker
- » Development of partnership arrangements with key local organisations such as Uniting Care Kippax and Strathnairn Homestead Gallery
- » Planning for community building activities, from community gardens and outdoor cinema to satellite events from Canberra festivals and events. Commencement of these activities early on including during early construction. Involve residents of the surrounding West Belconnen suburbs.
- » Public art and landscaping treatments that create a distinctive sense of identity for West Belconnen
- » Build upon the heritage of West Belconnen through community gardens and urban farming
- » Community tree planting days and other opportunities for environmental stewardship such as the establishment of a 'Bush on the Boundary' group
- » Schooling and recreational programs for children are likely to be a strong point of focus for community life particularly in the early stages of the project
- » Farmers markets and food festivals that provide opportunities for local economic and community development
- » Design of West Belconnen's neighbourhood and local centres should explore design solutions that are integrated with both urban and natural open spaces to provide a unique point of differentiation and key community focal points. This could contribute

7 Voice, influence and participation

Early engagement helps to foster a culture in which people expect to be involved in shaping their neighbourhood so that sharing their views and aspirations becomes a way of life. While this is difficult to achieve, it is essential for getting a new community off to a good start. It can help bring new and existing residents together and a proactive approach to engagement can help to provide accurate information about the developing community. Engaging with existing and prospective residents also establishes a 'culture' of participation that has lasting community benefits. Woodcraft et al (2012:39) found that:

A growing body of research supports the assertion that community and neighbourhood empowerment – giving residents the opportunity to take part in collective activities that influence the areas they live in – contribute to the wellbeing of residents and communities.

To date, the West Belconnen project has undertaken an extensive engagement process with both formal and informal engagement methods. A formal engagement strategy has been developed that guided engagement during the master plan stage and will continue through the following stages. There is a strong culture of engagement associated with the project which fits well with a social sustainability approach.



Community Workshop, 11 November, 2013, Photo: Elton Consulting

The experiences of the early 'pioneers' of West Belconnen will have a significant influence on the long term reputation of the new community. A poor reputation can last many years and can be difficult to address. That is one of the reasons why Riverview Projects in particular has made a significant effort to engage with future residents before they have arrived as well as with existing residents in wider Belconnen. This approach will continue with those West Belconnen residents who are first to arrive and will be the 'pioneers' of this area. These first settlers will be dealing

with a site in various stages of construction over many years, so good information and communication about these activities and positive ways to engage these new residents will be critical.

In the earliest stages, simply providing information in the form of a 'welcome pack' to new residents about their homes, local transport and other resources available in the neighbourhood serves both a practical purpose for newcomers and can be a useful way of making the initial contact. Utilising a Community Development Worker to conduct welcome visits, information packs and welcome events can help to provide information to new residents and engage them in their new community. Early provision of key amenities such as parks and shops is also critical in enhancing the experience of the first settlers.

As will be highlighted in the following section, there is some value in leaving some aspects of a new community 'incomplete' in order to provide opportunities for new local residents to participate. While the broader master planning may need to be 'locked in' there are a range of opportunities for new resident participation in a developing suburb. These include design of local parks and playgrounds, design, use and function of community centres and other social infrastructure and the design of neighbourhood and district centres. As pointed out by Woodcraft et al (2012:43):

Many of the aspects of social life that make communities flourish cannot be planned in advance – community projects, governance arrangements and other local institutions need to evolve, building on local relationships, recognition of common interests, a sense of mutuality and trust between residents and other stakeholders that again needs time to develop.

Early engagement helps to foster a culture in which people expect to be involved in shaping their neighbourhood so that sharing their views and aspirations becomes a way of life. While this is difficult to achieve, it is essential for getting a new community off to a good start. It can help bring new and existing residents together and a proactive approach to engagement can help to provide accurate information about the developing community. Engaging with existing and prospective residents also establishes a 'culture' of participation that has lasting community benefits. The Young Foundation (Woodcraft et al, 2012:39) found that:

A growing body of research supports the assertion that community and neighbourhood empowerment – giving residents the opportunity to take part in collective activities that influence the areas they live in – contribute to the wellbeing of residents and communities.

For West Belconnen it will also be important to engage with people from the surrounding Belconnen communities. People living in areas where growth is planned are likely to have very different concerns and aspirations from those moving into the new part of the community. Working with existing communities and service providers is an important engagement requirement. It can help to provide a greater understanding of the existing communities, cultures and environment and how that could be represented in West Belconnen through initiatives such as a co-operative ventures, farmers market, new business opportunities and community and cultural events.

One possible avenue for engagement in West Belconnen that could involve both existing and prospective residents is to facilitate an engagement process, along with the ACT Place Names Committee and the Names Board of NSW, for the naming of suburbs and streets within West Belconnen. Consultation would need to be undertaken initially with the Place Names Officer as there is an established process for place naming in Canberra. Most of Canberra's suburbs are named after famous Australians who have contributed to the existence of Australia as a nation. Each suburb has a theme by which its streets are named. The theme may include people, places, flora, fauna or things relevant and important to the history of Australia. The criteria for selecting names include:

- » The names of persons famous in Australian exploration, navigation, pioneering, colonisation, administration, politics, education, science or letters
- » The names of persons who have made notable contributions to the existence of Australia as a nation
- » The names of Australian flora
- » The names of things characteristic of Australia or Australians
- » Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander vocabulary.

The West Belconnen project team proposes to work with the Place Names committees of both the ACT and NSW to identify opportunities for community engagement in the process including eliciting suggestions from community members that address the above criteria. Community involvement in place naming is an important opportunity for greater community engagement with, and ownership of, West Belconnen and may also help to strengthen links with existing surrounding community members.

Co-operative models

One of those lessons from the existing, surrounding communities is the application of co-operative models of management to address local community needs. Kelly, in research on 'social cities' for the Grattan Institute (2012:27), writes:

Another way to encourage a local sense of identity is to create opportunities for people to make decisions about their neighbourhood. Helping to shape the future of the local area creates a sense of stewardship and promotes connection with other residents.

While the ongoing engagement process for West Belconnen is critical to achieving this stewardship and connection, another way that this is being addressed in West Belconnen is through exploring the potential for a range of co-operative ventures. Co-operatives are jointly owned and democratically controlled associations of people who are united voluntarily to meet common economic, social and cultural needs. Members often have a unifying interest and form a co-operative to tackle problems or derive benefits that are difficult to achieve alone.

Members of co-operatives usually fund the enterprise through a share or membership fee and benefit from the services provided. Accordingly a co-operative is a self help organisation that integrates social and economic objectives by generating mutual benefits. Democratic control means that members can control the affairs of the co-operative with one vote allocated per members regardless of their investment or use of services.

Co-ops may be for profit or not for profit but all aim to operate profitably. Co-ops can operate in sectors as diverse as transport, agriculture, energy, water, retail, housing, community services, child care and health.

Co-ops could be fostered initially in the existing suburbs of West Belconnen and then extend and expand to incorporate the new suburbs and residents. Discussion on this issue and potential social enterprises that will benefit both the existing and new suburbs of West Belconnen are already underway between Riverview and Kippax UnitingCare.

West Belconnen Health Co-op (Derby, 2012:125)

In 2004, Brian Frith, the chemist in Charnwood, on Canberra's northern fringe, compared notes with the organiser of the Neighbourhood Watch group, Roger Nicoll, and with Michael Pilbrow, the chair of the local primary school's Parents and Citizens Committee. All three were concerned that in an area with a high proportion of public housing, there was not one practising GP.

Following a series of public meetings and a survey of 8,000 households in the local area, a cooperative model was identified as an appropriate model for providing primary health care in the area. Over the ensuing years the cooperative concept was further developed with the help of a feasibility study and business plan partly funded through an ACT Government grant. Advice and support was also received from Australia's first medical cooperative, Melbourne's Westgate Health Co-op.

With additional funding support from corporate sponsors and both Territory and Federal Government, the West Belconnen Health Co-operative opened in January 2010. From that beginning with a single doctor, two years later the co-op employed ten doctors and had 12,000 local people as registered members.

The health co-op is 'owned' by its members. Members pay an annual membership fee which then entitles them to bulk billed GP services, as well as bulk billed allied health services such as dietician and psychology consultations. No profits are paid to anyone. After expenses are paid any remaining funds are used to provide services. For example, dietician and psychology services not accessible through Medicare are provided at significantly discounted rates compared to private providers.

The co-op is run by a Board elected annually by members. The volunteer board provides strategic direction to its CEO who is responsible for day to day operations. Anyone can become a member of the co-op. Fees are \$70 for a family and \$35 for an individual (rates are halved for those with a Health Care Card). Membership enables unlimited free medical consultations.

In 2013, membership has reached over 16,000 and employs 13 doctors, a nurse practitioner, 7 nurses and 13 administration and support staff. The co-op now includes 6 medical centres at Charnwood, Belconnen, Page, Holt, Evatt and Chisholm.

What does this mean for West Belconnen?

Establishing or facilitating structures for new community members in West Belconnen to be able to participate in decisions about their developing community is recognised as important. This could take the form of:

- » Participatory design processes for key infrastructure such as the main centre, parks and community facilities as a key part of the continuing engagement process for West Belconnen
- » Ongoing involvement of both prospective West Belconnen residents and existing residents from Belconnen and other surrounding areas in engagement and communication activities
- » Formation of working committees to plan for and conduct local community events and programs
- » A Community Development Worker appointed to establish community/residents associations
- » Development of a community website/portal or Facebook page for neighbourhood forums and information sharing
- » Investigation of opportunities for community involvement in the suburb and street naming process for West Belconnen
- » Investigating the feasibility of a range of social enterprises and cooperative opportunities from ride sharing to tool libraries as well as cooperative models for housing and services such as the West Belconnen Health Co-operative model.

8 Flexibility, adaptability and incrementalism

Reflecting a key purpose of this Community Plan, it is recognised that new communities need to be well planned to ensure that people-friendly spaces are included, essential social infrastructure is well integrated, and basic amenities are provided to support residents. However, consideration should also be given to ensure that the planning for new communities is not so fixed and rigid that it inhibits flexibility and impedes the capacity of a community to evolve and change. According to the Young Foundation (Woodcraft et al, 2012:43) new communities need the 'space to grow':

To develop a distinctive character, to shape the place so that it better meets local needs, and have the scope to change as populations age and shift and new patterns of work and social life emerge.

As an example of this, new communities are often planned in response to the needs of young families and first and second homebuyer households who are often strongly represented in the 'early pioneers' of new development areas. However, as new suburbs evolve, their initial populations age and they attract more mature households, planning to cater for a more diverse age profile is an important consideration. As pointed out by the Grattan Institute, as new suburbs mature and stabilise they will need to become more flexible. Although they may serve initial residents well, new suburbs "must adapt over time to the shifting needs and preferences of changing populations" (Kelly and Breadon, 2012:2).

A greater variety of dwelling types is essential to the overall sustainability of new areas like West Belconnen. Traditional suburban development has been dominated by detached dwellings of a similar size. While limiting housing opportunities for new residents, these suburbs also make it hard for existing residents to move within their area, to downsize for example as their lifestyles evolve and their housing needs change. As Kelly and Breadon (2012:6) observe "new suburbs are designed to meet the needs and preferences of their first generation of residents. But an inability to adapt will become a problem in the future as those communities mature and change".

Suggestions for improvements are greater land use mix within new suburbs including incorporation of greater dwelling variety and more flexible zoning including mixed use zones that allow for different activities. Flexibility is the key and what Woodcraft et al (2012:43) describe as "a degree of ambiguity, uncertainty and openness to change". As Kelly and Breadon (2012:52) conclude:

We cannot predict exactly how communities will change in the future but we can say with a high level of confidence that they will change. If today's suburbs are to be tomorrow's suburbs too, then they must be flexible enough to change with the people who live in them.

The need for flexibility is also important in the planning of social infrastructure. Community facilities that are planned to cater for a single purpose or use with limited capacity for adaptation are likely to become quickly redundant. Design for flexibility and multiple use is a key guiding principle for future planning of social infrastructure. Another aspect of this flexibility in design, and built in capacity for adaptation and evolution, is the 'meanwhile' or temporary use of otherwise underutilised spaces for community purposes. Residents in new communities can find themselves surrounded by various construction sites for many years. In this context, Woodcraft et al (2012:45) suggest that "intermediate or 'meanwhile use' of land and buildings can provide much needed temporary space for community activities and interaction".

In various parts of Australia, there has been a history of innovation with social infrastructure planning including the 'meanwhile space' use with the 'schools in shops' and 'schools and houses'. This is an example of using underutilised commercial or residential use for the provision of community services and facilities. A number of projects also exist focusing on the temporary provision of shopfronts and other commercial spaces for use by artists and other small and developing businesses. Renew Newcastle⁴ and Creative Spaces⁵ are local examples.

There may be opportunities in the centres of new suburbs for the use of 'meanwhile space' to provide needed social infrastructure and human service delivery points prior to the conventional demand thresholds being reached for some retail uses. As an example, underutilised shopfronts and other commercial type space (including Sales and Information Centres) can be utilised in an intermediate fashion as community facility space, pop up shops for retail, art or community uses and incubator space for small and home based businesses. Other examples include empty parcels of land utilised for community garden space and underutilised houses used for social enterprise or education space. As Woodcraft et al (2012:43) conclude:

If a new community is to be successful and sustainable, the place – the physical space, the housing stock and amenities, the social infrastructure – needs to be able to adapt over time to new needs and new possibilities. As Saskia Sassen points out 'in that incompleteness ... lies the possibility of making.'

It is recommended that planning for the first stage of the development of West Belconnen include some form of meeting and community activity space, even if in temporary form or as an adjunct to Strathnairn, to provide a focal point for the new community. At developments like Forde the Sales and Information Centre has doubled as a community centre and space for community meetings. Through the Community Development Worker, temporary or 'pop up' uses can also be introduced at the West Belconnen 'community space' on the first Saturday of every month.

⁴ <http://renewnewcastle.org/>

⁵ <http://www.creativespaces.net.au/>

What does this mean for West Belconnen?

For West Belconnen, the implications of providing 'space to grow' include:

- » Provision of temporary space for community facility use and human service provision prior to the establishment of the first formal/permanent community centre
- » Allowing open spaces that will not be constructed out for some time to serve temporary recreational purposes. (With the caveat that users understand that such spaces are reserved for future alternative uses)
- » A picnic ground or park with BBQs and a children's bike path or adventure playground
- » A functioning sales nursery that is also a legacy nursery for street and park trees
- » Utilising the Community Development Worker to program activities to promote social interaction and place activation including regular coffee van visits prior to the threshold for a retail café being reached.
- » Promote Strathnairn activities and negotiate with Strathnairn about the use of its site and facilities

All these would help to impart to prospective purchasers a sense of what the community of West Belconnen will be and that the foundations of community already exist. Beyond the establishment phase, some longer term initiatives that will help contribute to the creation of a sense of place and ownership at West Belconnen include:

- » Direct integration of centre or centres with the open space network
- » Creation of a bike network throughout the open space system that could become a regional destination linking with the existing Canberra network. The West Belconnen bike way could incorporate points of interest and a variety of attractors such as simple but unique adventure playgrounds, mountain bike segments, a children's bike way etc.
- » Creation of an equestrian network throughout the open space system that could become a regional destination and capitalise on the Bicentennial National Trail crossing the site. The West Belconnen equestrian network could incorporate points of interest and a variety of attractors such as overnight accommodation for riders and horses.
- » Incorporate fruit trees, bush tucker plantings and community gardens throughout the open space network
- » A community development program that will:
 - Develop a program for people to plant a tree in open space to mark the purchase of their house or birth of children to foster links and identification with West Belconnen now and into the future
 - Create plaques in footpaths to recognise the first 100 'pioneer' families to move into West Belconnen
- » Provision in centres for informal markets (food, craft, small wares etc) that provide an opportunity for small business. There is also potential to link this in with different cultural groups from the area or as an interim use for any unleased retail.

9 Green Star Communities – Community Development

This social sustainability strategy component of the Community Plan helps to identify a pathway to address many of the requirements for the Green Star Communities Community Development credit. The community development criteria include:

- » Development of a Community Development Plan – This document addresses many of the requirements of a Community Development Plan including:
 - > Aims of the plan
 - > Roles of the Community Development Worker
 - > Contents of the community development program
 - > Approach to community engagement
 - > Lessons from other community development programs to inform the West Belconnen program
- » Community Development Officer – This document identifies the roles of a Community Development Officer at West Belconnen as the key person responsible for implementation of the Community Development Plan. The criteria state that the Community Development Officer must be employed for at least one day a week starting from (at the latest) when 50% of buildings are occupied. This Community Plan also flags a number of possibilities for how the worker could be engaged
- » Community Group – Described in the criteria as a community group that is made up of stakeholders that are relevant to the local community and the initiatives within the plan. Through the engagement strategy, a ‘people and place group’ has been established to support the West Belconnen project. This group will address this criterion. The People and Place Group will also evolve overtime as new residents move into West Belconnen.
- » Community Events – The criteria require a program of community events to be established and implemented that provides at least one free community event every two months. This Community Plan identifies the main elements of a community development program for West Belconnen. Precise scheduling will be undertaken at a later stage to coincide with development staging
- » Community Information – this criterion relates to the distribution of information to the community. For the West Belconnen project the provision of information has already commenced. The project web site (already established) and regular newsletters (already commenced distribution) address many of the requirements for this criterion and will continue to evolve as the project progresses. For new residents community information will also be available via a community information pack detailed elsewhere in this report.

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West Belconnen Community Plan

Part 3 - Social infrastructure

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Disclaimer:

The development parameters (dwelling numbers, stages etc.) referred to in this report may vary over time. The figures contained herein are estimates; they represent a good approximation of likely development outcomes to a sufficient level of accuracy for the purposes of this report.

Prepared by

Reviewed by

Date 17 June 2014

Document name West Belconnen Comprehensive Community Plan Part 3

Version 7

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1 Introduction

This report forms the third part of the West Belconnen Community Plan. While the first report documented relevant project background and data and the second outlined a strategy to achieve social sustainability, this report focuses on social infrastructure requirements for West Belconnen. It has been prepared to support and inform the master plan for West Belconnen, the rezoning of the site and subsequent development applications.

Given that West Belconnen is in the planning stages, an emphasis on the design of the physical environment is recognised as a major opportunity. The master planning process is seen as a means to influence physical design of the new community and to promote social goals such as physical activity, healthy living, social interaction and community safety. The development of greenfield sites, even ones that constitute the effective continuation or completion of existing urban development, present a number of challenges as well as opportunities. This Community Plan will investigate how master planning for a large land release can be utilised to promote positive community outcomes. The provision of social infrastructure is a key element of the Structure Plan and is the focus of this part of the Community Plan.

This report includes:

- » Assessment of the need for a range of social infrastructure
- » Identification of social infrastructure requirements.

2 Social Infrastructure Provision

This part identifies likely requirements for community facilities and human services for the West Belconnen Project, based upon:

- » The demographic forecasts outlined in part one of the Community Plan
- » Assessment of the availability, distance to and capacity in existing facilities and services (in part one of the Community Plan)
- » Discussions with government agencies, and agency standards and benchmarks
- » The anticipated needs and preferences of the future population
- » The scope to promote cost effective provision by means of co-location or shared facilities
- » Issues of transport access, ongoing management costs, funding provision and facility ownership

Social infrastructure is provided by a wide variety of agencies including a range of government agencies, non-government organisations and the private sector. At the master planning phase, the strategy needs to focus on the facilities which may have known land requirements, to ensure that sufficient land is identified in appropriate locations to meet future need. This focuses particularly on facilities and services provided by the ACT Government agencies (such as schools). Services provided by the Commonwealth Government (eg employment services, some family services, veterans' services,) have land requirements that are likely to be relatively modest, and most likely will use available commercial office space within designated centres. Such sites can be identified in subsequent detailed levels of planning.

Also important in the ACT context are community type uses provided by the non-government and private sectors that may have land requirements. These include private schools, private health care services, churches, private childcare services, commercial gym and fitness facilities, residential aged care facilities and entertainment facilities such as licensed clubs. The master plan will need to allow sufficient scope and flexibility to accommodate these types of uses as demand emerges.

It is assumed that all services to the NSW component of West Belconnen will be supplied by ACT agencies (with appropriate cost sharing arrangements in place with NSW).

2.1 Social infrastructure objectives

The ACT Community Facilities Location Guide was summarised in part one of this Community Plan. Drawing upon these and based upon contemporary trends and leading practice for social infrastructure, the following principles will provide further guidance for the provision of community facilities and human services within the West Belconnen project.

Community facilities will be designed to:

- » Respond to local needs and reflect the local community's identity, values and aspirations
- » Contribute to the health, well-being and quality of life of residents, support their lifestyle needs and choices and encourage the development of social capital
- » Make the most efficient use of limited resources, where appropriate being multipurpose, co-located with other facilities and able to accommodate shared and multiple use arrangements

- » Be provided in an efficient, timely and co-ordinated way, ensuring that they are available to residents as early as possible and residents are not disadvantaged through delays in delivery
- » Ensure flexibility in their use, so they can respond and adapt as needs change. Where appropriate, buildings should be capable of delivering a range of services, rather than designated for single uses or specific target groups that may quickly become outdated
- » Promote equitable access for all sections of the population, through the distribution, design and management of facilities. In particular facilities should be affordable for their target population
- » Provide environmentally and economically sustainable buildings
- » Comply with Crime Prevention through Environmental Design principles and reduce risks of vandalism and poor security through consultation with police concerning the design and location of facilities
- » Promote innovation and creativity in the way agencies come together to deliver services, recognising the need for collaborative planning and partnerships to achieve effective and efficient delivery of human services
- » Be accessible for all user groups, with all facilities meeting accessibility standards
- » Promote integrated service delivery among related agencies, and
- » Develop sustainable ownership, governance, management and maintenance arrangements for facilities.

The location of community facilities has been guided by the following criteria. Community facilities should be:

- » Central to their catchment population and easily accessible by the majority of their users
- » Visually prominent, with a main street location and presentation to the street
- » Accessible by public transport, and located to maximize access for pedestrians and cyclists
- » Located to enhance a sense of community, vibrancy and local civic identity, and to help create a focal point or hub for the community. This includes places where people already have cause to congregate, rather than on standalone sites, for reasons of safety, accessibility and convenience. Shopping centres and schools are recognised as the key destinations where people tend to congregate within a neighbourhood. Locations within or adjacent to commercial centres also add to the activity level and critical mass needed to create a vibrant mix of activities and lively centre
- » Where appropriate, clustered together or co-located on a single site to provide opportunities for shared use of resources (management, parking, meeting rooms, amenities, play equipment) and for convenience, visibility and capacity for a "one stop shop". Clustering will also create synergies that promote better utilisation of services (for example, through cross referral of clients, or young people being more inclined to use a service that is adjacent to a place they already know)
- » Located to provide a high level of safety and security, particularly at nights and weekends. This is most usually associated with high levels of activity and casual surveillance, as well as lighting and proximity to public transport.

- » Where possible, located adjacent to open space to allow for larger outdoor community events, spill-over activities and children's play. Locations adjacent to outdoor recreation facilities such as tennis or netball courts can also provide a leisure focus as well as space for community activities
- » Located to ensure access to safe and convenient parking, including shared parking with surrounding land uses where appropriate.

2.2 Social infrastructure needs assessment

The future population of West Belconnen, estimated to be about 30,000 on completion, will be large enough to sustain a range of local neighbourhood facilities and potentially some higher order facilities designed to serve the total projected West Belconnen population. The assessment of required infrastructure will require consideration of not only the current capacity of existing facilities but also how that capacity may change over time as the population in the surrounding area evolves and changes.

While social infrastructure is traditionally defined as including community centres, libraries, youth centres, etc.; for West Belconnen it is also important to consider other types of facilities that serve a social function. Stott, Stott and Wiles (2009:17) in their review of the UK New Towns, considered the importance of local meeting places like neighbourhood shops. They write that sense of community was maintained through networks of family and friends and through the "mundane and routine interactions that take place at the local shops, hairdressers and post office" and found that "the loss of such places was seen as having quite devastating effects on the sense of community as opportunities for social interaction and engagement were reduced." Planning for West Belconnen should consider the important social function performed not only by formal social infrastructure like community centres, but also the community benefits gained through the availability of meeting and gathering places like shops, parks and playgrounds.

Following from this, at the local level, residents of West Belconnen will require access to the following:

- » Retail and commercial services
- » Spaces for informal meeting and gathering, such as cafes
- » Indoor spaces for community activities, programs and services
- » Medical services such as GP's
- » Childcare and some family support services
- » Schools
- » Local leisure and entertainment facilities, such as restaurants
- » Places of worship.

From a West Belconnen district perspective, residents will require access to the following:

- » Multipurpose spaces for a range of community activities, programs and events
- » A high school and other learning facilities
- » Civic and cultural space including a library
- » Sporting and recreation facilities
- » Larger areas of open space for active and passive recreation

- » Individual and family support services, and services addressing particular issues such as welfare, legal aid, employment, housing
- » Facilities and services for particular sections of the population, such as young people, older people, people with a disability, people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities
- » Larger places of worship
- » Emergency and safety services.

While the West Belconnen site is divided between ACT and NSW areas, the needs of the population have been considered for the development as a whole, rather than in two separate components. This reflects the ways in which people use facilities and services at the local level, without regard for artificial boundaries. It also recognises that planning on the basis of separate populations and catchments would not represent efficient and sustainable use of resources and would likely result in a fragmented, rather than, integrated approach to community facility provision.

The ways in which these needs will be met are described below, in terms of government, non-government and private sector responsibilities.

2.3 Analysis to support the assessment

Where available ACT or NSW Government planning standards have been used to identify community facility requirements to service the projected population of 30,000 people. These standards were used as a starting point for discussion with various government agencies. In some cases, such as with ACT Education, the recommended level of provision is lower than identified by the application of standards based on agency input.

In the absence of relevant government planning standards, rates of provision have been identified based on Elton Consulting's project experience and research from other areas. For example, for community centres, a rate of provision of 80 square metres per 1,000 people has been used. This is based on work with a number of local governments as shown below.

| Local Government Area | Community centre standard (square metres per 1,000 people) |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Liverpool (NSW) | 85 |
| Blacktown (NSW) | 80 |
| Hills Shire (NSW) | 80 |
| Maitland (NSW – existing provision) | 78 |
| Playford (SA) | 75 |
| Camden (NSW) | 64 |

For public library provision, the NSW People Places guide has been used. Although NSW-based, this is a nationally recognised planning standard for public library provision.

2.4 Indicative requirements for social infrastructure

The following table provides an indication of social infrastructure requirements.

| Facility | Definition | Existing facilities | Number required in West Belconnen | Size | Location |
|-----------------------------|--|--|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| Community centre (district) | A facility containing a range of multipurpose spaces such as halls, meeting rooms and interview space which are available for community use at an affordable price. May have a paid coordinator. | Holt Community Hub West Belconnen Family and Child Centre Belconnen Community Services | 1 | 1,600 sqm GFA If stand alone site area would be approximately 5,000 – 6,000 square metres | Central to catchment As part of or adjacent to main centre. Integrated with shops, open space |
| Community centre (local) | Smaller version of above providing local level meeting and recreational space to meet needs of local residents | Hawker Guide Hall Charnwood Scout Hall Kippax Uniting Community Centre | 1 | 800 sqm GFA If stand alone site area would be approximately 2,500 – 4,000 square metres | As part of community node |
| Library | A facility offering a range of literary and artistic materials and information delivery services which seeks to inspire lifelong learning and engagement of the community with ideas, creativity and knowledge | Kippax Library Belconnen Library | 1 | 1,200 sqm GFA. If stand-alone site area approx. 3,500 – 5,000 sqm | Ideally co-located with district community centre to form a community hub Strong links with main centre shops |

| Facility | Definition | Existing facilities | Number required in West Belconnen | Size | Location |
|-------------------------------|---|--|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| Long day care | A licensed child care service providing long day care for at least 48 weeks of the year, usually from babies to school age infants. | Closest facilities are Charnwood Full Day Care, Coolinda Cottage (Charnwood) and Nan's Child Care (Scullin). Data suggests reasonable capacity at moment. New Facility opening in Holt in 2015 | 3-4 | 3,500 square metres site area | Proximity to primary schools |
| Non-government P-6 | A non-government facility providing primary (usually combined with pre-school) education (P-6 or7 or P-10) | Closes non-government primary schools are St Thomas Aquinas and St John the Apostle. Scope exists for an independent (non-Catholic) school | 2 | 4 ha (site area) including an oval (3.5 ha if accessing an existing oval) | Central to catchment, linked to pedestrian system, within 400 metres of retail centre. Opportunity for shared open space and shared community hall. Possibility of co-location with child care. |
| Government High School (P-10) | A school facility providing primary through to year 10 education | Kingsford Smith Belconnen High School Melba-Copland ACT Education reports existing high schools currently have reasonable capacity | 1 | 8.6 ha including an oval (7.6 ha if accessing an existing oval) | Central to district catchment, on a collector or distributor road, within 400 metres of retail if possible. Where possible adjoin district playing field. Includes indoor recreation facility that will be shared with community use |

| Facility | Definition | Existing facilities | Number required in West Belconnen | Size | Location |
|-----------------------|---|---|--|---|---|
| Residential aged care | An aged care facility will accommodate clients at all levels of need. Facilities will almost always have more than 90 beds, however developers aim for 120 and sometimes over to ensure viability | Closest facilities include Canberra Masonic Homes, Ginninderra Gardens, Villagio Sant Antonio, Ridgecrest Retirement Village Currently limited vacancies in the area | 1 (will depend on market demand/ take up) | 75sqm of land is required per resident. This includes an allowance for 25sqm of external space. Approximately 1.5 ha site | Independent living units should be within 400 metres of shops, located to avoid residents having to cross high traffic roads, noise separation from schools, colleges, etc. Hostels and nursing homes should be located in residential areas |
| GP Medical centres | A surgery providing ongoing comprehensive health care | Various | 6-7 | 200 square metres GFA for a facility supporting 4 doctors and 1 nurse | Locations often include either shopping centres or commercial office zones. Facilities can also be located within other health service facilities, such as aged care accommodation where services can be shared. |
| Religious facility | A church or other religious space providing spaces for worship. Facilities may also be used for non-religious activities (e.g. social, educational and recreational activities) either exclusively by a congregation or hired by the general community. | Various | 3-4 or potentially fewer if shared, multi - purpose facility | Site areas from quite small to 10,000-15,000 square metres | Larger religious facilities can generate significant traffic and parking demands and may be best located out of purely residential areas. Shared, multi-domination facility encouraged. |
| Licensed club | A licensed club under the Liquor Act 2010 operated by a community or sporting group for hospitality purposes. | West Belconnen Golf Club West Belconnen Leagues Club Magpies Sports Club, Holt | 3-4 | Site areas range from 5,000 to 20,000 square metres | Within main centre Noise separation from residential areas |

| Facility | Definition | Existing facilities | Number required in West Belconnen | Size | Location |
|-------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| Recreation | | | | | |
| District Playing Field | District level fields reflecting ACT Sport and Recreation's centralised model of provision. A basic DPF includes six AFL/cricket ovals each of which can also be used as two union, league or soccer fields. DPFs may also include an enclosed field for premier level sports. | Kippax District Playing Field | 1 | 18 hectares site area including shared space included with schools | Central location Could be located on waste disposal site however DPF will need to be flood lit with lighting requiring significant foundations. Could be split into two smaller spaces if required due to site constraints |
| Indoor recreation | Multipurpose indoor sports courts that could be used for basketball, volleyball, netball, futsal and variety of other indoor sports | Belconnen Community Centre | 1 as shared P-10 school two court facility | Two court facility to be incorporated within P-10 school site | As part of P-10 school site. Requires a minimum of two courts. |
| Tennis | Outdoor courts for tennis includes club room/house | Four court facility at Kippax | 1 | 6 – 8 court facility Approximately 0.5 ha | As part of DPF |
| Squash | Indoor courts for squash | No local facilities | 1 | 4 court facility | As part of DPF |
| Swimming Pool/ Aquatic Centre | Indoor facility including 25 metre lap pool and leisure pool | Canberra International Sports and Aquatic Centre | 1 | 0.5 – 1.0 hectare | Edge of main centre |

The following section provides greater explanation of the facility requirements identified in the table above.

2.4.1 Government social infrastructure

Community centres

Community centres provide space for a variety of community activities and programs (e.g. fitness, playgroups, craft groups, after school activities), for organisations and community groups to meet, for the delivery of community services and for private functions, such as birthday parties. They also provide sources of community information and a focal point for community development initiatives and the building of community networks and support structures.

Community centres may be provided at a variety of scales to meet the needs of different sized catchment populations. In recent times, there has been a move away from providing small, stand alone community centres for local neighbourhood populations, on the grounds of their high management and maintenance costs, lack of flexibility, limited use, security problems and lack of capacity for staffing. Instead, leading practice now supports the provision of larger multi-purpose facilities for a larger population catchment that can provide a variety of higher quality social and recreational amenities and combine a variety of functions. Larger centres are also able to provide accommodation for human services organisations, thereby enabling centres to be staffed and so increasing their levels of activity. In this way they are better able to meet the needs of their catchment population than multiple small centres offering limited facilities.

For West Belconnen two community centres are proposed. It is noted that the ACT does not have specific standards to guide the sizing of community centres. Based upon Elton Consulting's experience in other projects and the functional requirements identified in this report, it is proposed that 2,400 square metres of community centre floor space be provided. One community centre would be a larger district level facility of approximately 1,600 square metres in floor area and the other a smaller more local community centre of approximately 800 square metres.

Within West Belconnen, the large multi-purpose community centre will incorporate:

- » A variety of large and smaller flexible spaces suitable for a range of social, leisure, learning and cultural activities. These might include a hall suitable for large gatherings and functions, performances and physical activity such as gymnastics or dance classes, and rooms suitable for smaller groups
- » Meeting rooms, also suitable for adult education or training activity
- » Play space for children's activities
- » Informal lounge / foyer area
- » Hot desks for a community development worker, and for other human service providers
- » Rooms for sessional services such as baby health clinic, counselling or family support services
- » "Reheat" kitchen suitable to support private functions such as birthday parties
- » Plenty of storage to meet the needs of a variety of user groups
- » Toilet facilities and nappy change / breastfeeding area
- » Adjacent outdoor space with children's play equipment and barbecue, to provide for spill over social events and activities for children.

It is proposed that the district multi-purpose community centre will be located within the main centre, on a site that satisfies the location criteria outlined earlier. A facility of this size will not be warranted until a population of substantial size has been established in West Belconnen. This is likely to be triggered by the time about 3,000 households have moved into the development. Also it will not be feasible to build the community centre until the main retail centre has been

established, and therefore its timing will depend on the overall staging of the development and sequencing of infrastructure servicing.

However, Riverview Projects recognises the critical importance of providing core meeting and activity space at the outset of development, to meet the needs of early residents and establish initial social support networks. For this reason, it is proposed that a temporary community centre be provided within Stage 1 of the development. This would be provided as soon as possible after the arrival of initial residents, to operate until the permanent facility in the main centre is operational. The temporary centre might comprise a demountable building, dwelling, or part of the sales centre. It would provide meeting and activity spaces suitable for groups such as playgroups and resident interest groups, and associated outdoor play areas.

To meet as wide a range of needs as possible, a variety of spaces of different sizes is desirable, with scope for flexible division, e.g. capable of being subdivided to accommodate small groups. There will however be a need for some large spaces with appropriate linked facilities (e.g. kitchens) capable of hosting larger gatherings, community events and private functions such as wedding receptions. There may also be a need for some specialist facilities – for instance wet and dry areas for arts and crafts, IT room for training activities, or sound studios / multi-media room for other cultural activities.

The smaller, more local community centre will be a useful attractor to assist with activating other nodes or focal points outside of the main West Belconnen centre.

Libraries

As outlined in part one of the Community Plan, the nearest library is in Kippax group centre, about 10 minutes' drive from the site. It is a small community library and has some capacity for expansion.

In the ACT, libraries are not planned according to standards, but reflect the availability of funding and budget allocations in addition to broad issues of population growth and demand.

ACT Libraries has advised that a new full service community library in West Belconnen is unlikely to be warranted, given the proximity of Kippax community library. In fact, the increased population of the area resulting from the West Belconnen development would increase the viability of the Kippax library and potentially result in this service being expanded. However, some form of local library outlet may be required, as a place for pick-up and drop-off of books from Kippax library. The Kingston shopfront library may be an appropriate model, indicating a need for shopfront premises in the main shopping centre. Alternatively, a library outlet may be co-located with the proposed multi-purpose community centre.

This requires further consultation with ACT Libraries. Our table of social infrastructure requirements suggests a library facility of approximately 1,200 square metres would be warranted. We would consider a library to be an essential anchor facility, and key attractor, for a multipurpose community centre located within the main West Belconnen centre. Libraries are essential sources of learning and gathering for a wide range of age groups through both traditional means and increasingly through access to technology. They are active throughout the day and evening and, therefore, can be important attractors in town or village centres.

Civic and cultural facilities

The north western part of the ACT is considered to be well serviced with cultural facilities, primarily through the Belconnen Arts Centre. A major expansion of this facility has been planned to include formal exhibition space, dance studio, and performance space, in addition to existing facilities for visual arts. Strathnairn Homestead Gallery also exists within the West Belconnen study area.

Given the availability of existing facilities, no purpose-built cultural facility is proposed for West Belconnen. However, to support local cultural development, some space for cultural expression will

be provided within the multi-purpose community centre outlined above. Design considerations for the multi-purpose community centre include:

- » The hall should be suitable for local performances and classes (such as dance, drama, music)
- » Activity spaces should include flexible areas to allow for community arts activities
- » Office and meeting space should provide for local cultural organisations and community groups
- » The foyer and reception area should be suitable for displays and exhibitions
- » Adjoining outdoor space should allow for community cultural events.

Facilities and services for young people

At the local neighbourhood level, the needs of young people for space for social and leisure activities may be met through the proposed multi-purpose community centre, which will include spaces and programs suitable for activities for young people, in particular access to IT facilities.

In addition, the needs of young people will be met through the open space, sporting and recreation facilities, and through the shopping centres and other public domain areas that will be designed and managed to be 'youth friendly'. A library at West Belconnen would also help to address young people's needs in its provision of technology services, digital media offerings, study space as well as acting as a meeting place for young people.

Young people will also be assisted to access the leisure and entertainment facilities and youth support services in the wider area, through early provision of public transport services. It should be noted however that in the suburbs immediately adjacent to the site there are limited facilities for youth. These facilities are concentrated in the Belconnen town centre.

Facilities and services for older people

Leading practice now steers away from providing age-specific buildings, such as senior citizens centres, which can only be used by specific sections of the population and which thereby run the risk of being under-utilised for much of the week or as the population changes. Instead, the usual practice is to provide multi-purpose facilities which have flexibility to incorporate activities for different target groups as required.

The social, leisure and recreational needs of older people will be met through mainstream programs and activities for the whole community and through specific programs and activities for older people delivered within the multi-purpose community centre. This may necessitate a fairly large centre, which can be used concurrently by different sections of the population (e.g. enable older people to have a social group at the same time as the playgroup is meeting). The office and sessional spaces within the multi-purpose community centre may also provide accommodation for some aged care services, depending on the needs of the future population. The facility design needs to consider the requirements of older people and people with a disability, and to incorporate accessibility principles to ensure flexibility and adaptability.

In keeping with the aim of creating a community that can be home to people of all ages, and that allows people to age in place, it will be important to recognise the needs of older people in the planning and design process. It will be especially important to promote a sense of safety and security and to make it easy for older people to move around, e.g. by providing seating in the public domain, appropriate pathways and an age friendly built environment.

Education

As outlined previously, many public schools closest to the development are currently at or above capacity. However, it is anticipated that there may be some capacity for new students at Latham Primary School. Enrolments and capacity will fluctuate as existing populations age and new

populations move in. Education and Training ACT has identified the need for a new P-10 school at West Belconnen. Beyond that Education and Training ACT will continue to monitor enrolment trends and seek to use existing school resources in the area to accommodate demand for schooling generated from West Belconnen. The Riverview Group will continue to work with ACT and NSW education agencies throughout the rezoning process and the master plan will maintain the flexibility to accommodate additional school sites should they be required in the future.

In discussions with a wide range of stakeholders for West Belconnen, schools are recognised as critical to community building. A number of opportunities exist for schools to play an important community development role in West Belconnen with many of these opportunities stemming from the 'schools as community centres' concept. This Community Plan assumes that ovals or play space incorporated into schools will be available out of school hours as a shared community resource. It is also assumed that the proposed P-10 school will include a two court gymnasium facility that will be available as a shared community recreation space outside of school hours. Opportunities also exist in the design of schools for consideration to be given to sharing of resources. For example, school design can, at least, provide the flexibility for school canteens to be designed so that they can serve multiple purposes. Examples include school canteens also functioning as a café, food outlet for general community use and as training spaces for hospitality based skills development. This flexibility focuses on maximising possibilities for the most efficient use of government infrastructure to provide the maximum possible community benefits.

Other education

Lifelong learning activities (e.g. community outreach programs, evening classes, U3A) will be accommodated in the multi-purpose community centre / library and possibly through the inclusion of an adult community education centre that could be associated with the community centre.

The West Belconnen population will rely on existing university and technical/vocational education facilities in established parts of Canberra, as outlined in part one of the Community Plan, to meet their requirements for technical and higher education.

Public and community health services

The new West Belconnen population will not be large enough in its early stages to support public and community health services in its own right, but will utilise those available in the surrounding Belconnen district. Chief amongst these are the Calvary Hospital and recently expanded Belconnen Community Health Centre.

The ways in which existing community health and hospital services will be expanded in the longer term to meet demand generated by West Belconnen will need to be considered as planning for the project proceeds. The planning of new facilities reflects the anticipated age and health profile of the incoming population, rather than simple population benchmarks.

The West Belconnen Health Cooperative is an existing, successful, local model that has the potential to be extended to the proposed West Belconnen development.

ACT Health has advised that there may be a need to provide some local community health services within West Belconnen on a sessional or outreach basis, such as early childhood clinic, health education activities or healthy ageing programs. The proposed multi-purpose community centre will provide sufficient space to accommodate such services and programs.

Human services

While the West Belconnen population is not expected to be particularly disadvantaged or aged, over time residents may need access to a variety of individual and family support services, such as those funded by ACT Health and the Community Services Directorate.

Consultation with representatives of these directorates suggests that:

- » No specific capital facilities would be required within West Belconnen for direct service provision
- » Funding is provided to a variety of community-based and non-government organisations to deliver welfare and support services. Most of these services are provided to larger district and regional population catchments. West Belconnen would be serviced by organisations currently servicing Belconnen, including Belconnen Community Service Inc, West Belconnen Child and Family Service and Kippax UnitingCare
- » However some of the funded organisations may want to or need to provide local services from a base within West Belconnen. The proposed multi-purpose community centre will provide spaces for sessional or outreach services, and some accommodation for community services (for example family counselling sessions, parenting advice classes or youth support activities). Alternatively, full-time services may lease commercial office accommodation in the centre without the need for purpose-built premises
- » The main requirements of welfare and support services to meet the needs of the growing population in the area will be for additional recurrent funding to expand their existing services and programs, rather than for built facilities. Such funding will need to be provided through a variety of government programs. Funding for these programs will need to be increased in line with population growth in the area and departmental resource allocation processes

A community of almost 30,000 people will generate sufficient demand to support direct onsite provision of certain services to support health and wellbeing, in many cases on an outreach or sessional basis. There will also be a need for some office and administrative space for service providers. The range of services will need to respond to the particular needs and characteristics of the incoming population, but is likely to include support services for young people, older people, people with disabilities, and parents and families.

Justice and emergency services

As outlined in part one of the Community Plan, the ACT Emergency Services Agency (ESA) has recently opened a new ambulance / fire station at Charnwood to serve the suburbs adjoining the West Belconnen site.

At this early stage in the planning process, ESA is not able to determine how it would service West Belconnen, as servicing arrangements will be influenced by likely response times, dependent upon the future road network. However, it is unlikely that ESA will require a site for a new facility within West Belconnen, especially in the short-medium term. It is probable that West Belconnen will be serviced from the new facility at Charnwood, with services expanded through additional staffing. Whilst response times to the West Belconnen Project area via the existing road network are adequate, they will be improved by the completion of the Ginninderra Drive connection which provides a direct link to the Charnwood facility.

2.4.2 Recreation facilities

This section of the Community Plan focuses on active indoor and outdoor recreation facilities (recreation centres and sports facilities). Other forms of open space (parks, trails, playgrounds, etc.) are addressed in the Landscape and Open Space plans.

District Playing Fields (DPF)

ACT Sport and Recreation is encouraging a model of provision for sports fields that focus on the provision of fewer but larger and better equipped district level sports fields that can accommodate a number of sports in a centralised and accessible location. ACT Sport and Recreation report that two of the main drivers behind this model of provision are unsustainable levels of required maintenance (with multiple, dispersed smaller fields) and issues with sports club viability and efficiency when clubs are forced to play across multiple (home) locations as smaller fields may be inadequate for the needs of the club.

While nationally accepted standards for sports field provision do not exist, ACT Sport and Recreation suggest that a nominal standard of approximately 0.6-0.7 hectares of sporting field for every 1,000 people is a reasonable starting point for assessing active open space requirements in new development areas. Applying the 0.6 figure to the West Belconnen projected population of 30,000 gives an estimated total of active open space of approximately 18 hectares.

While the figure of 18 hectares is understood, providing that amount of space in a single district playing field in West Belconnen is challenging due to a number of significant land constraints. An alternative of providing the 18 hectares in the following configuration is being explored:

- » Approximately 10 hectares as the main district playing field
- » Approximately 5 hectares as a secondary major playing field area (with either the 10 or 5 hectare area being co-located with the P-10 school)
- » Approximately 3 hectares distributed as shared school/community space among schools.

A further alternative being considered has arisen out of recent discussions with the ACT Economic Development Directorate (EDD) regarding the planning of Molonglo Stage 3. It is understood that similar land constraints in Molonglo Stage 3 may prohibit the location of an identified district playing field within that development area. Given the issues there, and at West Belconnen, EDD, ACT Sport and Recreation and Riverview, are considering the possibility of a regional level playing field (to serve both West Belconnen and Molonglo Stage 3) located in between both development areas. If that were to be the case, at least from the West Belconnen perspective, some playing field provision would likely still be provided within West Belconnen (possibly between 5-10 hectares) with the remainder provided as a contribution toward the regional sports field.

Discussions on this issue are continuing at the time of writing.

An important issue for further consideration in the later more detailed design stages is the design of sports fields to encourage multiple use during various times of the day and week. While organised sport remains popular, the most common activities for most Australians involve informal recreation and exercise including walking for pleasure and health. Sports fields require significant space allocations for uses that predominantly occur during weekends. While training and other activities do occur, there is a danger that sports fields can remain largely unused during weekday hours. Co-location with schools is one way to address this inefficiency, but also important is the design of these spaces to encourage greater informal and passive use with walking trails, landscaping, fitness equipment, playgrounds, seating, etc.

Indoor recreation

While discussions with ACT Sport and Recreation suggested that a stand-alone indoor recreation facility in West Belconnen may not be warranted, it is recommended to include a two court indoor recreation facility as part of the P-10 school that would be a shared school-community recreation facility. For this to be viable, it is recommended that this facility comprise a minimum of two multipurpose courts. School design will need to consider the location of the facility on the school site to enable community access while also recognising the security requirements of the school.

Tennis and Squash

Discussions with ACT Sport and Recreation revealed a lack of tennis and squash facilities in the West Belconnen area currently. A 6-8 court tennis facility and a 4 court squash facility are recommended with both suggested to be located within the District Playing Field.

One option to consider in relation to tennis are 'family tennis areas' an idea proposed by Tennis Australia. The 'family tennis area' model is basically smaller, modified tennis courts in parks and open spaces that encourage whole family participation. The 'family tennis areas' are part of Tennis Australia's 'tennis hot spots' program that encourages children to play tennis. Some ACT schools such as Kaleen Primary School have a 'family tennis areas' as a result of the hot spots program. As of May 2014, Tennis Australia was seeking expressions of interest for local councils and others who are interested in exploring the concept of smaller, modified tennis courts.

Aquatics

Discussions with ACT Sport and Recreation expressed some reservations about the inclusion of aquatic facilities in West Belconnen. However, as with other areas in Canberra, community demand for aquatic facilities is likely to be strong. The nearest public swimming facility is located at Bruce (Canberra International Sports and Aquatic Centre) with the Kings Swim Centre private swim school located in Macgregor. Available standards from Parks and Leisure Australia (2012) and Aquatics and Recreation Victoria (2011) suggest the provision of a 25 metre indoor pool with leisure pool to serve a population of 30,000.

2.4.3 Social infrastructure provided by non-government and private sectors

Shops and commercial services

Retail and commercial services to satisfy local everyday needs will be provided in the proposed centre. Residents will also make use of the Kippax Group Centre and district shopping facilities in Belconnen.

Children's services

A number of different forms of childcare and activities for young children are generally provided in a community, including long daycare, family daycare, pre-school, occasional care and playgroups. Additionally, services to support families with young children may be provided.

It is not appropriate at this stage of the planning process to try to anticipate need for the various types of services. Instead, leading practice encourages planning of flexible multi-purpose childcare centres, which can adapt as precise needs are identified or provide a mix of services.

The provision of childcare has changed substantially in recent years, associated with shifts in government regulation and funding policy, such that the private sector is now the provider of the majority of childcare centres in Australia. As such, the provision of childcare in most new developments is commonly now largely left to market forces, once need can be demonstrated.

However, as an indication of the potential requirement for childcare centres, the benchmark of 1 centre per 4,000 residents, adopted elsewhere within the ACT, has been applied. This suggests a need for around 7-8 childcare centres within West Belconnen (although need will depend upon the number of places included in each centre). Given that West Belconnen will eventually be home to a large proportion of families, a high level of demand for child care is anticipated and it would therefore be prudent to make allowance for at least 3-4 centres. This also recognises that each of the 3-4 primary schools will also incorporate a pre-school component.

Where feasible, child care facilities should be dispersed across the community. However, demand is unlikely to be sufficient for a centre in every neighbourhood. This will be subject to feasibility assessment by potential commercial operators.

The location of childcare centres should have regard to the following principles:

- » Childcare should be provided in central and conveniently accessible locations, and primarily in centres to reinforce the role of the hub as the focal point for the community
- » Childcare should be located adjacent to complementary land uses such as schools and community centres
- » Childcare centres should not be located in residential areas that have amenity impacts on adjoining residents (particularly in terms of traffic congestion).

Locations for childcare centres should be identified as part of the planning and design process for each neighbourhood. Locations close to other community and commercial uses are preferred, with good transport access. Facilities require a substantial open-air play area and siting and design are subject to strict licensing requirements. The early provision of high quality facilities can be facilitated through the development process and is likely to be a marketing attraction to early home buyers.

Considerations for an EOI process include:

- » The affordability of childcare services, given the likely socio-economic profile of residents
- » Opening hours to meet the needs of parents who work long distances from their homes
- » Providing a mix of long day care places and pre-school places that is consistent with the employment patterns and needs of families
- » The sustainability and viability of facilities, particularly given recent upheavals in the private childcare sector
- » The need to provide adequate spaces for 0-2 year olds, who are less “profitable” than older children because of their higher staff ratios
- » Capability to include children and families with special needs e.g. children with a physical disability.

Planning for childcare will also need to address the need for out of hours school care for primary school aged children. Such need is usually met through multi-purpose childcare centres, through before and after school programs co-located within schools or through vacation care programs in community centres and schools.

Non-government schools

As noted earlier, the closest non-government schools to the site are at St Thomas Aquinas Primary and St John the Apostle, both of which are Catholic. Brindabella Christina College has also recently opened in Charnwood. In 2014 there is one Kindergarten class, that will expand to include K to Year 1 in 2015, and eventually a 12 months to Year 12 Campus will be located on the site.

Independent schools (including Catholic Schools) currently cater for over 40% of ACT school-children, and the availability of independent schooling at West Belconnen would be a major attractor to families seeking a new home there.

Site requirements will depend on the specific needs of the proponents, but are likely to include a central location within the catchment area with good road access. As private schools cater to a wider catchment area, connectivity with the regional road network is a key consideration. Site area requirements are generally similar to public schools with around four hectares for a primary and seven to eight hectares for a P-10.

Market demand for private schools and partnership opportunities will be assessed in subsequent stages of planning and development. Considerations include:

- » Choosing providers and models that are likely to appeal to a broad cross-section of the West Belconnen population, rather than a restricted faith or non-mainstream education philosophy
- » Choosing sites that are easily accessible for the broader catchment areas that characterise private schools
- » The extent to which private providers may consider early provision of facilities
- » The extent to which providers may consider sharing of their facilities (eg library, sporting facilities, school hall) with the broader community, or with other private or public schools
- » The affordability of the services they offer in relation to the likely socio-economic profile of West Belconnen residents.

Medical services

The West Belconnen population will be large enough to support a number of general practitioners, medical specialists and a variety of allied health services such as dentists, physiotherapists and natural health practitioners, pharmacists, and imaging and pathology services.

Such services are generally accommodated in commercial suites in town / village centres, without the need for purpose-built facilities. The proposed group centre within West Belconnen will contain sufficient spaces for such uses. The West Belconnen population will also rely on health and medical services in the wider area.

The national benchmark for GP's is currently 1 (full-time equivalent) GP per 1172 residents. A population of 30,000 people will generate a need for around 25 GPs.

In this regard, models of care in general practice service provision are changing rapidly. Previous GP diffusion into growing population areas through isolated small practice cottage surgeries is not sustainable due to a number of factors including lifestyle expectations and financial imperatives. GP's are increasingly aggregating into larger multi-faceted practices offering the opportunity for increased integration in care provision with government funded health services. Demand for, and location of, GPs is largely a commercial consideration for individual providers. Doctors' surgeries are permitted uses within residential zones, so in theory no special provision needs to be made in the planning for West Belconnen.

Most specialist and allied health services address a sub-regional catchment, although it is anticipated that some private practitioners will wish to set up in West Belconnen once demand is demonstrated. As with GPs, commercial space within the town centre or in local neighbourhood centres is likely to prove attractive to physiotherapists, dentists and other allied health workers.

It is no longer prudent to expect market forces to attract the GP workforce required to service a growing population as demand emerges. There will be a need for strategies to attract and retain private sector health services, in particular medical centres and dental practices. If these are simply left to the market to come along later, it is highly likely that they will be provided inadequately. In the short term, Riverview should encourage a local medical centre to establish

within stage 1 in the interest of ensuring that an onsite GP service is available as soon as this is practical. One option for this could be a West Belconnen Health Cooperative clinic. In the longer term, the inclusion of commercial office space and professional suites within the group centre will provide suitable accommodation for medical services.

Considerations for a potential EOI process for the provision of a medical centre in West Belconnen include:

- » The number of GP's in the practice and its sustainability
- » Whether the practice bulk bills
- » The range of services offered
- » Hours of operation, arrangements for out-of hours and home visit services and back-up
- » Arrangements for diagnostic services
- » Early establishment of a medical centre
- » The location and accessibility of medical services, particularly to people who do not have private transport
- » The implications for other local GP's of any large corporations establishing medical centres in West Belconnen.

Once GP's are attracted to West Belconnen, it would be expected that allied health and associated services such as pharmacies are likely to follow. These services will require commercial premises in group and local centres, including shopfronts and professional suites, or adapted dwellings in residential neighbourhoods.

Residential Aged Care

Residential care facilities are permitted uses within community facility land use zones. Aged care facilities need to provide ready access to shops, services and public transport, and so should be located close to the group and local centres.

A further key issue for residential care facilities (and retirement housing more generally) is the high cost of land in suitable locations that provide good access to services, facilities and public transport. As a result, residential care facilities are often forced to locate on the urban fringe, with the risk that older people will be isolated from mainstream community life. It will be important that sites for residential care facilities that are suitably located are identified as planning for West Belconnen continues.

Considerations for an EOI process include:

- » Whether aged care organisations have existing bed licenses to provide residential aged care facilities
- » The levels of care and support services (both residential and community) they will provide
- » Whether organisations are from profit / not for profit charitable sectors
- » The resources providers will bring to West Belconnen and the extent of any assistance they will be seeking.

It should be noted that most of the accommodation needs of older people and people with a disability can be met through well designed and located self-care housing that allows them to live independently within the community, and that less than 10% of people in these groups will seek entry to residential care facilities providing supported accommodation. This reinforces the importance of encouraging a mix of housing types and sizes in each neighbourhood, in order to provide housing choice for older people and people with a disability.

Following on from the general principles encouraged in social infrastructure provision by this Community Plan, the location of residential aged care should consider co-location or clustering with uses where synergies, including community building activity, could be facilitated. As an example, a number of programs exist where residential aged care is located close to schools and child care and, allowing for the necessary child protection requirements being addressed, residents of the retirement village/aged care facility are able to provide volunteer support to the schools and child care centres and/or the children are able to visit the facility for a range of activities. These intergenerational activities can provide great personal and community building benefits for both children and adults. The physical master planning for West Belconnen should enable these kinds of connections.

Entertainment facilities

Higher level entertainment facilities (e.g. theatres, art galleries) are available in the district located at Belconnen and other town centres. Local facilities and services, both community-based and commercial, will also be desirable within West Belconnen, and these will need to include:

- » Art/exhibition space, attached to a library or community facility (such as Strathnairn)
- » Spaces that support local cultural activity e.g. local music, dance and drama groups, workshop space for artists (also possibly Strathnairn)
- » Cafés, restaurants, clubs and pubs
- » Spaces for multi-cultural groups to meet and hold activities
- » Opportunities for outdoor leisure and entertainment (e.g. an amphitheatre suitable for movie screenings, festivals and markets)

Leisure and entertainment facilities such as restaurants, pubs and clubs will be provided on a commercial basis by private sector operators according to market demand, with suitable land available within the mixed use and commercial areas within the centre. Key considerations for Riverview include:

- » Ways of encouraging the early provision of entertainment facilities at the outset of development, given the existing shortage in the surrounding area
- » Ensuring entertainment opportunities are affordable, particularly for young people
- » Including both indoor and outdoor entertainment opportunities.

Riverview should also be mindful that:

- » Quality public art is desirable as a means of promoting a sense of place.
- » There are likely to be opportunities to acknowledge and celebrate the Aboriginal and European cultural heritage of West Belconnen through onsite features or facilities.

Places of worship

As well as providing places of worship, these facilities can provide an important base for community development, youth, volunteer and welfare support activities in new communities, and are important in building community spirit and identity. Places of worship may also provide halls and other spaces which can be utilised for community activities by the general community. Religious organisations may also be providers or partners in the provision of other community facilities and human services (particularly for young people, older people and disadvantaged groups). For these reasons, it is important that places of worship be established within West Belconnen.

The acquisition of sites for places of worship is generally left to market forces, according to their ability to purchase sites, and it is difficult to specifically identify sites in the master planning process.

Ensuring that places of worship are provided within West Belconnen will be a matter for consideration in subsequent planning and development phases.

It is recognised that that not every religious organisation needs its own facility, and that such organisations may also utilise other community facilities for their meetings, (such as community centres and schools), particularly as these are often not used by others when demand for space for religious activity is at its highest (for example on a Sunday morning for Christian denominations).

Alternatively, and consistent with the general principles of social infrastructure provision described in this Community Plan, a multipurpose, multi-faith, flexible shared use facility should also be considered as an alternative model to separated places of worship for each denomination.

The following issues should be taken into consideration in the future planning of places of worship within West Belconnen:

- » Places of worship can contribute significantly to community identity and activity. They should be located close to other types of community facilities to create synergies and help provide a focal point for the community (eg located within centres).
- » Places of worship need to be readily accessible and visible, and located so as not to impact on adjoining residential areas.
- » Given the limited utilisation of such facilities across the week, it is important that opportunities for shared or joint use be explored with other types of facilities, or multiple religious groups, in the interests of making the most efficient use of land resources. This includes shared provision of parking and meeting/activity space.
- » Design and placement of places of worship can offer significant urban design benefits in terms of providing iconic buildings, landmark features, community identity and way finding.
- » Denomination of places of worship will need to be considered once the community becomes established. The existing West Belconnen suburbs are serviced by a range of Christian churches.

2.5 Models of provision

While previously community facilities have been viewed as places for the provision of support and services for disadvantaged communities and those in need of assistance, the role of social infrastructure is increasingly expanding. While the provision of social support will continue (with a greater focus in some areas, depending on community needs), community facilities have undergone a transition to also become places of celebration, information, recreation, education, social gathering and community building.

One of the fundamental innovations in social infrastructure provision centres on understanding, and perhaps reinterpreting, its role and purpose. Despite a number of significant lifestyle changes related to technology and the nature of work, many people still identify feeling part of a community as an important priority in contemporary life.

Trends in community facilities planning are responding to an appetite from a wide range of communities, for safe social places where people can gather, meet and feel like they are part of a broader community. This includes the provision of places where people can interact and engage in both formal and informal ways including shared public spaces where you can work and interact as

part of a group or where you can be there independently but still participate (even as an observer) in the life of the community. Supporting the notion of a third place, the Libraries Building Communities Project (State Library of Victoria, 2005) found that libraries are “fast becoming the ‘village greens’, ‘neighbourhood’, or ‘community hubs’: places where people can meet, and exchange ideas and information. Many libraries now provide coffee and tea to strengthen this role. People come, spend time, interact ...”.

Community hubs

Community facility provision cannot be considered in isolation. Facilities must be viewed as being connected and integrated to each other as well as being part of a broader urban fabric that links with shops, town squares, parks, plazas and other features of centres. While it is not desirable to attempt to develop a single model for all community facilities, the community hub model provides some direction for future provision. Community hubs have been variously described as:

A space where communities gather and meet, supported by a range of compatible land uses including residential, retail, commercial (economic/employment), open space, social infrastructure, education, transport, essential services and technology uses ... They offer a way to improve services to each individual community, and deliver services in an efficient, effective and inclusive way. Community hubs enhance local character and identity, create active and vibrant centres, and assist in casual surveillance and safety (Sunshine Coast Council, 2011)

A conveniently located public place that is recognised and valued in the local community as a safe gathering place for people and an access point for a wide range of community activities, programs, services and events (Parramatta City Council, 2008).

A series of conjoined building on a new central site where a wide range of community services and activities can be co-located. A place where the community can come together to have many of their needs met. It may include a neighbourhood learning centre, a senior citizens centre, a youth centre, meeting rooms, a childcare centre, a public library and much more (La Trobe City Council, 2008)

A hub is a collection of facilities clustered together on the same or adjoining sites ... Together, they create a focal point for community activity. A hub is often also a base for outreach services to other smaller facilities or surrounding communities. Community hubs can also be created by locating a number of facilities in a common locality. This arrangement would be appropriate in transit-oriented and inner-city communities, where social spaces in the public domain are limited. These hubs play an important role in helping to bring people together and creating a sense of local community identity (Queensland Government, Office of Urban Management, 2007)

Although each of these definitions has a slightly different emphasis, we can see that a community hub, in essence, is a multipurpose public gathering and activity place where a variety of activities occur and where a wide range of community needs can be met in both formal and informal ways. The key to the community hubs concept is integration. This can mean both integration of services, programs and activities within a multipurpose community space or the integration of a range of activity generating uses including community and cultural facilities, shops, transport, parks and plazas.

The essential characteristics of a community hub appear to be that they:

- » Respond to, and are shaped by, the unique circumstances, needs and assets of their community

- » Co-locate or cluster a range of community facilities and human services
- » Include a variety of uses (including residential, retail and commercial) that attract different groups of people at different times of the day for a variety of purposes and meet a wide range of community needs and support community strengths
- » Attract people and are identified as a focal point and gathering place for the community
- » Are readily accessible to ensure all members of the community can use them
- » Have a civic quality, sense of stability and level of amenity that mark them as an important place in the community
- » Include an inviting public domain that encourages people to interact in the public realm.

Community hubs respond to the key policy directions of ACT Government for community facilities as well as the vision and guiding principles for West Belconnen in that they:

- » Are based in locations that are readily accessible by public transport and where people already congregate
- » Cluster with other activity generating uses to increase convenience and enhance safety
- » Bring community services together to improve both coordination and convenience of use
- » Provide for multiple uses, serve a range of population groups and offer a diversity of services, programs, activities and events
- » Provide important gathering places for people and act as a focal point for community activity
- » Often rely on partnerships arrangements to be most effective with no one entity likely to be completely responsible for funding, service provision or operation.

An essential feature of community hubs, regardless of scale, is that they are a form of social infrastructure that is not seen in isolation but rather as an integrated, valid and contributing element of a vibrant and interesting activity centre. They can act as important people attractors and add significant value to town and commercial centres; their multipurpose nature also enables them to be targeted to address specific community needs and to adapt and evolve over time.

There are also potential benefits for service delivery of community hubs including:

- » Pooling of resources to provide better facilities
- » The concentration of compatible services and facilities to create a community focal point
- » Improved access and safety for users who can access a range of services in a single location
- » More integrated and innovative delivery of services
- » More efficient use of land and other resources, through shared, rather than separate, uses such as meeting rooms, staff amenities and parking
- » Greater viability of services and agencies through sharing of resources.

In West Belconnen there is the potential for a number of the recommended facilities to be integrated within a community hub. The larger multipurpose community centre and library are obvious choices for a hub arrangement and could potentially be combined with child care, adult education and potentially health and medical services.

3 Next steps

This stage of the planning process has focussed on the physical (land) requirements for social infrastructure to enable provision to be incorporated into the master plan and reflected in the rezoning. However, to achieve the desired community outcomes for West Belconnen an ongoing process of stakeholder engagement and partnership building is required. While provision of the physical spaces for community activities to occur is fundamental, the desired community benefits will not be achieved without a coordinated approach to service delivery and community development.

The ACT Government is currently introducing a new approach to human services provision, the Human Services Blueprint. The blueprint aims to provide a more integrated and coordinated approach to human service provision and attempts to overcome some of the traditional bureaucratic obstacles to a more streamlined and integrated approach to service provision. With the physical social infrastructure, according to this Community Plan, providing the facilities that encourage cooperation and integration, West Belconnen may provide a good test case for the ACT Government to trial the Human Services Blueprint.

A References

Aquatics and Recreation Victoria (2011), *Indoor Aquatic and Recreation Facility Development Guidelines*, State Government of Victoria

Parks and Leisure Australia (2012), *Benchmarks for Community Infrastructure*, Davis Langdon Australia



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West Belconnen Community Plan

Part 4 - Housing

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Disclaimer:

The development parameters, (dwelling numbers, stages etc.) referred to in this report may vary over time. The figures contained herein are estimates; they represent a good approximation of likely development outcomes to a sufficient level of accuracy for the purposes of this report.

| | |
|---------------|---|
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1 Introduction

This report forms the fourth part of the West Belconnen Community Plan, and focuses on housing objectives, requirements and potential strategies for West Belconnen. It has been prepared to support and inform the master plan for West Belconnen, the rezoning of the site and subsequent development applications.

The development of greenfield sites, even ones that constitute the effective continuation or completion of existing urban development, presents a number of both challenges and opportunities. The Community Plan will investigate how master planning for a large land release can be utilised to promote positive community outcomes. The provision of diverse, affordable and adaptable housing is a key element of the master plan and is the focus of this part of the Community Plan.

This report provides a preliminary analysis of housing needs and strategies for housing diversity, affordable housing and adaptable housing for the West Belconnen project. Diverse, affordable, and adaptable housing is vital for sustainable communities, thus forming a core component of West Belconnen's vision to be a sustainable community of international significance in the nation's capital. Furthermore, delivering the housing outlined in this plan and achieving West Belconnen sustainability objectives will contribute to gaining recognition as a 6-star Green Star Community under the Green Building Council of Australia's Green Star – Communities PILOT rating tool.

Part 4 of the Community Plan outlines the national, state and local planning frameworks that will influence the implementation of housing strategies in West Belconnen. It then draws on current Australian models and international best practice to identify the most appropriate options and mechanisms for implementation at West Belconnen, and the implications of these for the project. The mechanisms identified include: land use planning, financial strategies, social housing, private-public partnerships, community title, land rent, shared equity, community land trusts, housing cooperatives, boarding houses and granny flats.

This report includes:

- » **Section 2:** An outline of the housing objectives for West Belconnen, including relevant Green Star – Communities PILOT credits and compliance requirements
- » **Section 3:** An analysis of key demographic forecasts to build understanding of the significance of affordable, adaptable and diverse housing in West Belconnen
- » **Section 4:** Definitions of diverse, affordable and adaptable housing and their importance
- » **Section 5:** A summary of the national, state and local planning frameworks that will influence the implementation of housing strategies in West Belconnen
- » **Section 6:** A review of the most appropriate options and mechanisms available to provide affordable, adaptable and diverse housing at West Belconnen
- » **Section 7:** An outline of the implications of these mechanisms for the West Belconnen project

2 Housing Objectives

The overarching housing objectives for the West Belconnen project include a variety of initiatives to help build a diverse and cohesive community. These are drawn from 1) the projects initiatives (listed in Part 1 of this Community Plan), 2) the project's vision (the projects objectives under the Heads of Agreement with the ACT Government), 3) government policy and the 4) Green Star Communities Pilot rating tool.

The relevant **project initiatives** include:

- » Incorporating a variety of housing types in the master plan to ensure diversity;
- » Providing a variety of block sizes and density in house and land packages to improve housing affordability and exceed government targets for affordable housing, and
- » Establishing adaptable housing to allow residents to age in place as their lifestyles change.

The guiding social objectives for housing in West Belconnen, which have been developed by Riverview in the **project's vision** and adopted by the ACT Government, are:

- » Designing for social equity, affordability, diversity and interdependence, honouring differences and catering for the needs of individuals through all stages of life
- » Maximising health, safety and comfort of the built environment to provide enduring quality of life

The relevant ACT **Government Policy**, the Affordable Housing Action Plan (outlined in detail later in this report) requires that 20 per cent of new homes within greenfield estates meet affordability thresholds (ACT Government, 2011). The West Belconnen project aims to exceed this threshold.

In NSW, the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 contains provision for affordable housing as do a range of other planning policies. A specific threshold is not stated in these policies.

The **Green Star – Communities PILOT rating tool** is an independent, national, voluntary rating tool aimed at driving the development of more sustainable, productive and liveable Australian communities. Six categories (governance, design, economic prosperity, liveability, environment and innovation) are used to define key areas of assessment under the rating tool. Within each category projects can earn credits by achieving defined levels of performance related to specific issues such as engagement, community development, and biodiversity enhancement, among others.

The West Belconnen project aims to be a world leader in the development of a green star community and achieve a 6 star rating (international best practice). To contribute to this rating and achieve the West Belconnen visions and social objectives, the project aims to achieve two credits from the economic prosperity and the liveability category that are relevant to housing. These credits are entitled 'Liv-7 Accessibility and Adaptability' and 'Econ-5 Affordability'. To achieve these credits the project must meet the criteria listed in the following table:

Table 1 Greenstar credits relevant to housing

| Green Star – Communities PILOT Credit Criteria relating to housing |
|--|
| Liv-7 Accessibility and Adaptability |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible and adaptable dwellings |

- Up to four points are awarded based on the percentage of dwellings in the community that have achieved Silver level in accordance with the Guidelines for Liveable Housing 2010 published by Liveable Housing Australia. Points are awarded based on the percentage of compliant dwellings; a minimum of 50% is required to achieve one point. All four points will be awarded if all dwellings comply.
- Accessible transport, outdoor spaces, and buildings
 - Four points are awarded where the community provides accessible transport, outdoor spaces and public buildings.

Econ-5 Affordability

- Minimum Requirement - Living Affordability
 - To be eligible for this credit, projects must achieve at least two points within other categories that relate to low income family support.
- Four points are awarded where:
 - For residential spaces, projects implement at least two housing affordability strategies as described in this credit or equivalent.
 - For non-residential spaces, projects implement affordability strategies or processes within the development.

(Source: GBCA, 2012)

To achieve the housing objectives for the West Belconnen project, **housing diversity, housing affordability** and **housing adaptability** need to be addressed. The following sections discuss the demographic forecasts for the West Belconnen project and provide descriptions of these key terms.

3 Demographic Forecasts

In this section the current and projected demographic profile and housing needs for the ACT and West Belconnen are discussed. A strong argument for the need for affordable housing in West Belconnen is presented and an affirmation of the project's goal to exceed 20% affordable housing is also discussed.

3.1 Demographic profile of ACT

The Institute for Governance at the University of Canberra (IFG UC, 2013; IFG UC, 2014) has conducted a detailed analysis of the demographics of the Canberra-Queanbeyan region. The relevant findings are reproduced here in the following 8 points (IFG UC, 2014, pp1-4):

1. The Canberra-Queanbeyan region is one of the most economically competitive and liveable major cities in Australia:

- » Ranked 4th in the Globalisation and Cities Research Program's (GCRP's) Urban Competitiveness Index, comparing the growth of Australia's 18 major cities:
 - > Australia's most competitive city on most productivity measures, including university-qualified workers.
 - > Competitive on liveability measures such as wealth and volunteerism, but room for improvement on cost of housing.
 - > Room for improvement on sustainability measures, including water use, ecological footprint, and public transport use.

2. The Canberra-Queanbeyan region is gaining residents through internal migration:

- » Net gain of 3,900 people from across Australia between 2006 and 2011.
- » A gain from 13 of Australia's 17 other major cities, especially Sydney.
- » Gains in internal migration are projected to increase to as much as 30,500 by 2036-41.
- » 24,600 new residents to the Canberra-Queanbeyan region from overseas between 2006 and 2011

3. People movement to the ACT from the surrounding region is on the increase:

- » The ACT gained 5,558 people, and lost 7,351 people to the surrounding region¹ between 2006 and 2011.
- » This net loss of 1,793 is down from -2,714 in 2001-2006.
- » The ACT's net *gain* of residents from the surrounding region is projected to hit 3,000 by 2036-41.

¹ The surrounding region refers to the council areas of Cooma-Monaro, Goulburn Mulwaree, Palerang, Queanbeyan, Upper Lachlan and Yass Valley.

4. The ACT's overall population is on the increase:

- » The ACT population was 356,587 in 2011: up 15.3% since 2001.
- » Population growth for the surrounding region (15.3%) was identical between 2001 and 2011.
- » Using an average of seven different projections by GCRP (3), the ABS (3), and the ACT Government (1), the ACT is projected to have 427,800 residents by 2021 and 566,200 by 2041.

5. The ACT's population is ageing:

- » Proportions of ACT population aged 35-64, and 65 and over, increased between 2001 and 2011.
- » Projections suggest as much as 20% of the ACT's population could be 65 or older by 2041.

6. Dwelling choices of ACT residents vary:

- » ACT residents still typically reside in stand-alone (detached) homes (2011 data):
 - > 70.5% of dwellings in the ACT were detached,
 - > 14.8% were semi-detached (such as a terrace- or townhouse),
 - > 14.2% were part of a flat, unit, or apartment block.
- » Faster growth in the number of compact dwelling types between 2001 and 2011 than for detached homes (semi-detached homes, and flats, units and apartments will be referred to jointly as compact dwelling types):
 - > Note the increase in the number of compact dwelling types in the ACT between 2001 and 2011 was greater than the national average.
- » Small numbers of people per dwelling:
 - > ACT and Belconnen district average just 2.6 people per dwelling.
 - > More than half (50.9%) of all dwellings in the ACT contain only one or two occupants.
- » Smaller households (of 1-2 people) are more inclined to live in compact dwellings.
 - > Those aged 20-39 and 70 and over are also more inclined than the ACT average (for all ages) to live in a compact home.

7. Housing costs are outpacing income growth

- » Between 1996 and 2011, the ACT's median household income grew by 116.7%. However
 - > Median mortgage repayments increased 134.8%, and
 - > Median rent payments increased 153.3%

8. New dwelling projections for the ACT:

- » Using an average of projections by GCRP (incorporating a mix of local and national factors) and the ACT Government, it is projected the ACT will need approximately 27,800 new dwellings by 2021, and 100,600 by 2041. Of these new dwellings, it is projected that detached homes will make up only 45% between 2011 and 2021, and 38% between 2011 and 2041.

- » The ACT Planning Strategy has also established a policy of 50% infill, 50% greenfield for future residential development in the ACT. This would require land for more than 50,000 new greenfield dwellings across the ACT between 2011 and 2041.

3.2 Population projections for the West Belconnen Project

Work undertaken during the master planning process for West Belconnen on housing yield and other development parameters have resulted in the following parameters:

Table 2 Development parameters for West Belconnen

| | |
|------------------------------------|--------|
| Total Dwellings (NSW and ACT land) | 11,500 |
| NSW Dwellings | 5,000 |
| ACT Dwellings | 6,500 |
| Dwellings produced/sold per annum | 300 |
| Total population | 30,000 |
| Persons per dwelling | 2.6 |

The table below shows the population of the main service age groups over time for West Belconnen. It was produced prior to the finalisation of the housing yield for West Belconnen but adequately demonstrates the demography spread of the population over time. It is based on the following assumptions:

- » Production of 300 dwellings a year for 39 years (giving a total projected population at the completion of the development of 30,420 people)
- » An estimate of an average of 2.6 people per dwelling
- » Age profile benchmarked against Gungahlin for the first ten years and Belconnen (at year 20)
- » Age profile benchmarked against ACT Government ACT Population Projections at year 25
- » A constant age structure is assumed for year 25 onwards.

Table 3 Demographic projections for West Belconnen

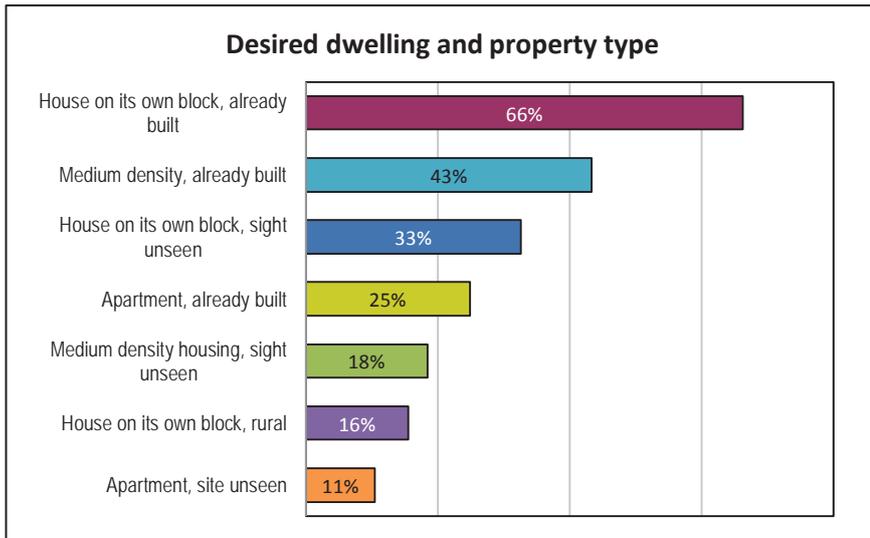
| Year | Babies and pre-schoolers (0 to 4) | Primary schoolers (5 to 11) | Secondary schoolers (12 to 17) | Tertiary education and independence (18 to 24) | Young workforce (25 to 34) | Parents and homebuilders (35 to 49) | Older workers and pre-retirees (50 to 59) | Empty nesters and retirees (60 to 69) | Seniors (70 to 84) | Elderly aged (85 and over) | Total |
|---------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|-------|
| Year 5 | 423 | 427 | 266 | 406 | 932 | 909 | 323 | 128 | 52 | 10 | 3874 |
| Year 10 | 675 | 748 | 501 | 1086 | 1793 | 1848 | 579 | 321 | 105 | 22 | 7679 |
| Year 15 | 924 | 1005 | 775 | 1526 | 2329 | 2583 | 1127 | 816 | 421 | 89 | 11594 |
| Year 20 | 1104 | 1268 | 1047 | 1880 | 2624 | 3191 | 1845 | 1536 | 912 | 192 | 15600 |
| Year 25 | 1326 | 1615 | 1336 | 2088 | 3101 | 3978 | 2262 | 2009 | 1482 | 273 | 19469 |
| Year 30 | 1591 | 1933 | 1610 | 2506 | 3721 | 4774 | 2714 | 2410 | 1778 | 328 | 23365 |
| Year 35 | 1856 | 2255 | 1878 | 2924 | 4341 | 5569 | 3167 | 2812 | 2075 | 382 | 27259 |
| Year 42 | 2228 | 2706 | 2254 | 3509 | 5209 | 6683 | 3800 | 3374 | 2490 | 459 | 32711 |

NB: This table was produced prior to the development parameters for West Belconnen being finalised. Hence it indicates the development being completed in 42 years with an ultimate population of 32,711. Adopting a production rate of 300 dwellings per annum and a total housing yield of 11,500 dwellings the development would be completed within 39 year period rather than 42 year period with a total population of 30,420.

3.3 Potential Residents of West Belconnen

In November 2013 Orima Research was commissioned to undertake a project to identify respondent's house purchasing intentions, locational preferences, housing preferences and perceptions of West Belconnen. The research involved a telephone interviews with randomly selected individuals from across Canberra and the immediately adjacent areas. The relevant findings are detailed below.

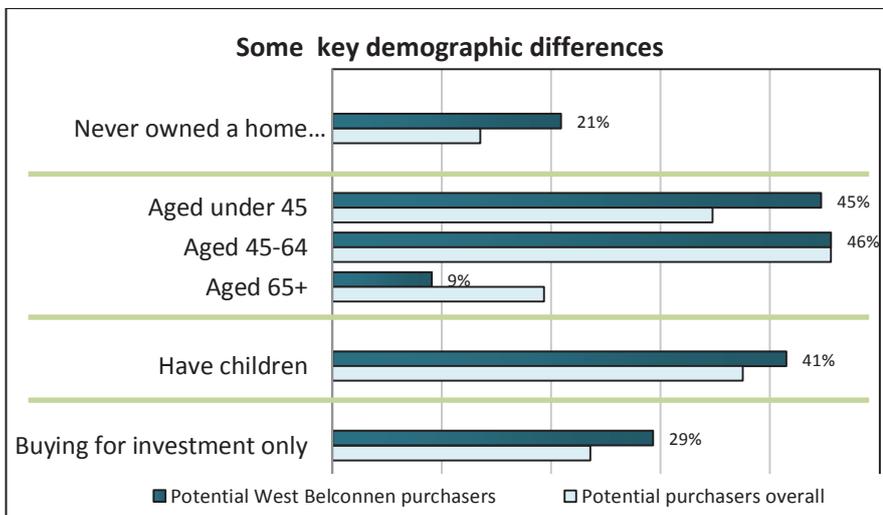
- » Downsizing was identified as a significant trend. More people want to downsize their house or block than upsize.
- » Of potential purchases 25% gave 'require a smaller home' as a reason for moving
- » Interest in apartments, terraces and town houses is increasing compared to earlier studies
- » Alternative housing affordability initiatives e.g. shared kitchens and laundries were received unfavourably.
- » Interest in land only and house and land packages is declining



The Orima research identified that the 'core market' for West Belconnen were likely to exhibit the following characteristics

- » To have a household income under \$150,000
- » To have children
- » To be employed
- » To be younger (61% under 45)
- » To have lived in their current home for less than 5 years
- » To live on a small block
- » To be a first home buyer
- » To be more price sensitive.

Affordability was a significant factor in people's decision to consider a home in West Belconnen (41%) along with location (47%). These factors were followed by housing type, quality and block size.



3.4 Implications

Key points related to the demographic projections:

- » Canberra's liveability and desirability is blighted by its affordability issues (IFG UC, 2013)
- » Canberra's population is ageing. An adequate supply of age appropriate housing is essential to allow people to age in place or in their neighbourhoods
- » Housing costs are outpacing income leading to an affordability crisis
- » People are becoming more interested in compact dwellings and different dwelling types than previously, i.e., people are more interested in diversity, affordability and adaptability potentially as a result of costs but also lifestyle changes
- » By using the population and dwelling projections listed above for the ACT and for the West Belconnen project, approximately 60 affordable dwellings per year would need to be produced to achieve the project goal of exceeding the 20% affordable housing threshold.

4 Understanding Diverse, Affordable and Adaptable Housing

4.1 What is housing diversity and why is it important?

Housing diversity has been described by best practice industry guidelines (Landcom's Housing Diversity Guide, Landcom, 2011) as important because it enables neighbourhoods to provide for changing demographics, lifestyles and life stages and is an important influence on affordability. A greater diversity of housing type can add richness to the community by encouraging residents at different life-cycle stages and of household types into the neighbourhood. More diversity can cater for households on a range of income levels. It can also contribute to the visual interest of the streetscape and neighbourhood, countering the homogeneity of built form which can occur when all the dwellings are of a similar type.

The Housing Diversity Guide provides information on key aspects of a building design that can encourage housing diversity. In particular it highlights small house size (floor space ratio) and compact lots (minimum lot size) as the most critical development controls that influence diversity and affordability (Landcom, 2011, pp9-10):

Affordability

Affordability is one of the main drivers of the demand for smaller homes on compact lots. The design of new house types needs to take into consideration all aspects relating to cost – including the base land cost, building cost and design efficiency. Housing affordability can be improved most significantly by reducing the size of the land.

Protect amenity

Just because homes may be smaller and/or clustered more closely, this does not mean that amenity for residents and their neighbours is automatically reduced as a consequence. Well-designed homes will ensure that privacy, both visual and acoustic, and solar access to private open space and internal living areas, are successfully achieved.

Provide choice

The housing market for smaller homes is not limited to one particular house type or lot size. A wide range of housing product needs to be delivered to ensure that there is adequate choice for homebuyers, and to contribute design variation to new neighbourhoods.

Integrate

Smaller homes and lots should be integrated into new and existing neighbourhoods in a way that protects or improves streetscapes and amenity. Good planning and design can ensure that mixed-housing neighbourhoods have a quality character with good public and private amenity.

'Salt-and-pepper'

It is important that smaller homes should not be grouped in only one location in a development, but 'salt and peppered' in a variety of locations. There may be localised 'clustering' of housing types, however, this should not be to an extent which clearly identifies an area as being different to otherwise similar areas. The secret to successful housing diversity is to normalise it.

It should be noted however that this is to an extent contrary to one of the most fundamental principles of integrated land use and transport planning namely to *develop concentrated centres containing the highest appropriate densities of housing, employment, services and public facilities within an acceptable walking distance — 400 to 1000 metres — of major public transport nodes, such as railway stations and high frequency bus routes with at least a 15 minute frequency at peak times* (NSW Department of Urban Affairs and Planning 2001). It is also inconsistent with the Statement of Strategic Directions for the Territory plan which states *higher density development will be encouraged within and near major centres, and in other suitable locations that are well served by public transport.*

For West Belconnen therefore this control should be read that the affordable housing should be appropriately located on major transport routes and near facilities and designed in a manner that the dwelling is not obviously an affordable housing product.

Allow for tenure variety

A variety of tenure options will help meet people's changing needs at different stages of their housing career. Housing diversity will help provide for renters, recent purchasers, homeowners, investors and social housing tenants. It will also provide choice at different life stages.

Environmental sustainability

New homes should be designed to maximise their environmental performance. For example, consideration should be given to the orientation of homes and open space, building materials and insulation. Small clusters of homes can also be designed in a way that achieves sustainability gains on a larger scale.

Opportunities for the provision of housing diversity should be considered through the strategic planning process, particularly at the local level and during master planning of development projects. Once housing needs have been identified the provisions regarding minimum lot sizes and floor space ratio should be drafted in the concept plan and the estate development plan (in the ACT) and the local environment plan and the development control plan (in NSW) to ensure that housing diversity objectives are able to be delivered. It is also important that the concept plan (ACT) and the local environment plan (NSW) provide for adequate housing diversity and facilitates the provision of affordable housing.

Other development controls that influence diversity and affordability include:

- » Integrated housing controls
- » Site coverage
- » Landscaped area controls
- » Building envelope and setback controls
- » Solar access

Diverse housing options

The Housing Diversity Guide provides seven examples of diverse housing products. For each example Landcom describe the typical development controls that would be appropriate for the house type.

Examples include:

- » Secondary dwellings or 'Granny Flats
- » Cottage lot detached dwellings
- » Duplexes or semi-detached dwellings
- » Terraces or townhouses
- » Stratum titled studio housing
- » Zero lot detached dwellings
- » Triplexes and 'Manor Homes'.

Additional options that could be considered in the Canberra context which have been effective in other developments include:

- » Apartments
- » Bungalows
- » Group homes
- » Shop top apartments

Housing diversity is one of the core objectives of the West Belconnen project and the principles of diversity and housing options listed above will be central to achieving this objective. Housing affordability is critical to achieving this diversity.

4.2 Why is affordable housing important?

Declining housing affordability is an important issue facing local governments, states and territories in Australia. Households in lower income brackets, both renters and purchasers, are finding it difficult to meet their housing needs. A growing number of households, particularly those on lower incomes, are paying what is considered to be an unsustainably high proportion of their incomes on housing. When factoring in the wider costs of living, such as electricity, water and transport costs, many first home buyers are unable to enter the market due to unprecedented increases in the purchase price of houses, and the associated pressures on the already stretched rental market.

At the same time, governments have become unwilling to build new public housing and have strict criteria for homes that are available to those in severe need. The result is that the remaining stock of public housing is now reserved for those in severe need. Low to moderate income households are often caught in the middle between social and above average market housing, and left without housing provision or housing support.

The limited availability of affordable housing poses economic, social, spatial and environmental problems. High housing costs lead to more personal borrowing and the economy becomes more sensitive to rising interest rates. Labour mobility diminishes and areas become spatially polarised between the rich and the poor. For some families the diminution of disposable income and overcrowding can affect their quality of life, health and social interactions.

A lack of affordably priced housing can have an acute impact on key sectors in a local community. Key workers - those people who provide an essential service such as nurses, home and community care workers, police officers and teachers - are typically low-paid and can be priced out of a local housing market. Pressure on key workers to seek more affordable housing further away from their place of employment can cause problems for the communities they live in or leave behind.

4.3 What is affordable housing?

A national approach to describing and analysing affordable housing provides a consistent process to identifying housing need and informs the range of tenures, products, and price points necessary to deliver housing to meet those needs.

The following terminology and affordability benchmarks have been agreed within the framework of the National Affordable Housing Agreement².

Affordable housing

Affordable housing is:

- » appropriate for the needs of a range of low and moderate-income households; and
- » priced so that households are able to meet other essential basic living costs (Gurran, 2008).

Appropriate housing

Appropriate housing:

- » is appropriate for that household in terms of size, quality, accessibility and location;
- » is integrated within a reasonably diverse local community;
- » does not incur unreasonable costs relating to maintenance, utilities and transport;
- » provides security of tenure and cost for a reasonable period.

Low and moderate-income households

Low and moderate-income households have incomes below 120 % of the gross median income of all households. The category may be sub-divided for some purposes into:

- » households with incomes below 50 % of the median ('very low-income')
- » households with incomes between 50 and 79 % ('low-income')
- » households with incomes between 80 % and 119 % ('moderate-income').

Level of housing costs

There is no precise measure of the affordability of housing costs. A widely-used indicator (the General Affordability Indicator) is that mortgage or rental payments should be less than 30 % of household gross income. Other indicators are sometimes used in response to particular circumstances, policy goals or administrative considerations.

Housing stress

A term first used in Australia by National Housing Strategy (1991/92) to refer to lower income households with high housing costs. It has since been widely used as a (de facto) standard for

² The National Affordable Housing Agreement defines the objectives, outcomes, outputs and performance indicators, and clarifies the roles and responsibilities, that guide the Commonwealth and the States and Territories in the delivery of services across the housing and homelessness services sector. The aspirational objective is that all Australians have access to affordable, safe and sustainable housing that contributes to social and economic participation.

The NAHA is an agreement by the Council of Australian Governments that commenced on 1 January 2009, initiating a whole-of-government approach in tackling the problem of housing affordability.

assessing affordability problems in Australia. The two most widely used approaches to defining households in housing stress are:

- » Those households whose gross income falls in the bottom 40 % of the income distribution and who are paying more than 30 % of their household income to meet their housing costs (this is sometimes referred to as the 30/40 rule); or
- » The (larger) group of households who have gross incomes below 120 % of the median household income and who are paying more than 30 % of their household income to meet their housing costs.

Target groups for affordable housing

Households that are likely to require affordable housing can be grouped into three categories according to the kind and duration of housing response that may be required. The commonly used target groups for affordable housing include (Milligan, 2005):

- » Very low-income households with multiple disadvantages: The need for housing assistance is likely to be significant and ongoing for these households.
- » Low-income households: These are households who face a housing affordability problem because they have low incomes. They may, or may not, be employed.
- » Moderate-income households: These are households with somewhat higher incomes (up to 120% of the median) but whose circumstances place them below the margin where they can afford market housing, especially in higher cost locations.

4.4 Housing Affordability in Australia

The performance of Australia's housing market has been mixed, with some sub-markets – in terms of tenure type, location, and quality – performing better than others. On the whole, Australia has had strong house price growth over the past decade, largely reflective of increases in the prices of established houses and land rather than construction. Despite house price falls that accompanied the Global Financial Crisis (GFC), house prices are experiencing growth once again (National Housing Supply Council, 2012). However, despite a relatively stable macroeconomic environment characterised by income and population growth and low unemployment, there are a number of factors causing the housing market to soften.

These factors include:

- » affordability issues
- » consumer caution
- » fewer investors.

Generally, there has also been strong economic and employment growth over the last decade. Combined with financial deregulation and product innovation in financial markets, this has caused an increase in the ability of households to borrow for housing. This has meant that a larger number of households are able to access credit and enter the home ownership (or investment) market.

Despite these strong housing market and economic and employment conditions, the number of lower and middle income households having difficulty meeting their housing costs, or meeting the full cost of becoming home owners, is increasing.

Research literature shows that over the last two decades property prices have increased faster than wages, entry to home ownership is hard for many groups and there are shortages of affordably priced rental accommodation. The result is that Australia has some of the worst affordability problems in the developed world, according to many surveys (Demographia, 2014).

Key trends over this period show that:

- » average house prices relative to income have almost doubled
- » average monthly payments on new loans have risen more than 50% (\$500)
- » the proportion of low-rent homes has fallen by at least 15%
- » opportunities to rent public housing have fallen by at least 30%.

The result is that housing stress has increased even though incomes have risen (Yates & Milligan, 2007). In the last decade house prices in Australia grew by 147% and household income grew by just 57% (National Shelter 2013). Across Australia more than one in ten households are in housing stress, equating to over 850,000 households who, after paying for housing costs, are at risk of financial hardship and poverty. The highest rates of housing stress are felt by renters and first home buyers, with 26% of renters and 15% for first home buyers in housing stress. (AAH, 2012). Many other owners, purchasers and renters have to live in unsuitable housing to avoid unaffordable rent or mortgages. These "hidden" victims may already out-number those who are paying above the benchmark (Disney, 2007).

Key 2012 indicators for housing supply and affordability for purchasers across Australia (NHSC, 2012) show that:

- » 48% of lower income households with a mortgage faced direct housing costs of more than 30% of gross income in 2009-10. 27% faced costs of more than 50% of income.
- » 42% of mortgage-holding households in the bottom half of the income distribution (at or below the 50th percentile) faced costs of more than 30% of their income.
- » 19% of mortgage-holding households in the bottom half of the income distribution faced costs of more than 50% of their income.

For renters, there have been increases in the number of lower income households facing high housing costs in the private rental market. Rental affordability deteriorated across both cities and regional areas of Australia. The key findings (NHSC, 2012) for renters show that:

- » 60% of lower income private tenants paid rents in excess of 30% of their income in 2009-10, and 25% paid in excess of 50%.
- » 68% of private renters wholly reliant on government income support, paid rent in excess of 30% of total household income (factoring in Commonwealth Rent Assistance)
- » 28% paid in excess of 50%.

As part of a stocktake of the broader rental market, the National Housing Supply Council assessed how many properties were affordable and available for lower income groups. The key findings of this analysis show that in 2009-10, there were 1,256,000 private rental dwellings that were affordable for the 857,000 private renter households with incomes at, or below, the 40th percentile. Of these, 937,000 were occupied by households in higher income groups. As a result, the apparent surplus of affordable rental dwellings for the lowest two income quintiles was actually a major shortfall of 539,000 dwellings (over 60% of underlying demand).

Australia's underlying demand is projected at current trends to increase by nearly 3.3 million households between 2010 and 2030. Although housing supply will also increase over this period, it will do so at a slower rate than underlying demand. As such, supply is projected to continue to fall

short of the growth in underlying demand. These trends suggest that housing affordability will continue to be a major issue for years to come.

4.5 Housing Affordability in Canberra

Housing options for low to moderate income earners are highly constrained in the ACT with housing affordability being a significant issue. According to ACT Shelter 2013 Fact Sheet on housing and affordability in the ACT:

- » In the six years to 2012 housing costs increased 63% making Canberra's housing market one of the country's least affordable for low and moderate income earners. Canberra has the highest median house price in the country after Sydney.
- » Mortgage repayments have increased rapidly since the mid-2000s. In 2001 the median house price was 3.4 times the annual average income. This increased to 6.2 times the annual average income by 2013
- » Between 1991 and 2011 house prices in the ACT increased by 263 percent while after tax income increased by just 95%
- » The supply of social housing has decreased in real terms over the past 20 years. The impact of the large scale sale of public housing properties during the 1990s and 2000s is yet to be reversed, and limited investment in public and community housing since this time means that the ACT's social housing system cannot deliver sufficient affordable housing to meet demand or need (ACT Shelter, 2013).

The HIA-Commonwealth Bank affordability index for the March Quarter 2014 reveals that "apart from Hobart, the ACT is now the nation's most affordable capital city market for housing. Affordability improved by 7.7 per cent in the ACT during the March 2014 quarter and stood some 17.6 per cent more favourable than a year earlier. As well as the reduction of mortgage interest rates to record low levels over the past year, the ACT market has seen earnings creep up by 1.7 per cent over the past year. This is despite the programme of Commonwealth government cutbacks which have had a disproportionately large impact on the ACT economy.

The acceleration in home prices across much of Australia over the past year by-passed the ACT market, with the Commonwealth government budgetary situation contributing to falling home prices in the Territory.

All of these factors have combined to significantly improve the affordability of ACT dwellings. Affordability in the March 2014 quarter showed its most favourable result in fourteen years. It remains to be seen how further fiscal retrenchment will affect affordability in the ACT house market".

Rentals

The ACT private rental market is one of the most expensive in the country and vacancy rates are among the lowest. In the private rental market more than 40% of low to moderate income earners experience housing stress (ACT Shelter 2013).

The 2014 annual Anglicare Australia Rental Affordability Snapshot confirmed that there is a chronic absence of affordable housing in Canberra-Queanbeyan particularly affordable rentals. Properties were identified as being affordable if the rental price fell at or below 30 percent of the family income for a range of household types. These included a family of four reliant on the Newstart allowance, a couple on the aged pension and a single student on Austudy

The study revealed:

- » There are practically no affordable rental options found in Canberra or Queanbeyan for any low-income households with the exception of shared housing for singles
- » There has been a significant increase in the number of rental properties available overall
- » Singles with a minimum wage could afford lower-priced share housing but no 'live alone' private rental options
- » There were slightly more properties affordable to couple on the Age Pension compared to 2013. However the proportion of the market has not yet hit 1%. Nearly all properties found available for this group were in Queanbeyan
- » All properties found affordable for single aged pension were in shared accommodation, which is unlikely to be a realistic option
- » There are no properties affordable to a single parent with a child even if that parent has a full time waged job.
- » Low paid and particularly part time workers are unable to afford housing in this market.
- » The current definition of 'affordable rent' set at 74.9% of market rent is in many cases still too expensive for people on low, fixed incomes.
- » The housing affordability crisis in Canberra is worsening. This is placing significant pressure on government housing programs as well as contributing to financial stress and social exclusion in families unable to access subsidised housing.

Table 4 Number and percentage of affordable rental properties for each household type.

| Household Type | Payment type | Number affordable and appropriate | Percentage affordable and appropriate |
|--|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Couple, two children (one aged less than 5, one aged less than 10) | Newstart allowance (both adults) | 0 | 0.0% |
| Single, two children (one aged less than 5, one aged less than 10) | Parenting payment single | 0 | 0.0% |
| Couple, no children | Age pension | 22 | 0.7% |
| Single one child (aged less than 5) | Parenting payment single | 0 | 0.0% |
| Single one child (aged over 8) | Newstart allowance | 0 | 0.0% |
| Single | Age pension | 97 | 2.9% |
| Single aged over 21 | Disability support pension | 0 | 0.0% |
| Single | Newstart allowance | 1 | 0.0% |
| Single aged over 18 | Youth allowance | 0 | 0.0% |
| Single in share house | Youth allowance | 0 | 0.0% |
| Couple, two children (one aged less than 5, one aged less than | Minimum wage + FTB A | 14 | 0.4% |

| Household Type | Payment type | Number affordable and appropriate | Percentage affordable and appropriate |
|--|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 10) | | | |
| Single, two children (one aged less than 5, one aged less than 10) | Minimum wage + FTB A &B | 0 | 0.0% |
| Single | Minimum wage | 280 | 8.3% |

Anglicare Australia: 2014 annual *Anglicare Australia Rental Affordability Snapshot pp25-6*

Table 5 Overview of affordable rental housing in the region

| | CANBERRA / QUEANBEYAN | WAGGA WAGGA | GOULBURN | SOUTH COAST |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Average weekly rental | \$595 | \$295 | \$268 | \$220 |
| Main rental cluster | \$470-\$540 | \$230-\$280 | \$250-\$265 | \$200-\$250 |
| Total number of rentals | 114 | 265 | 27 | 91 |
| # Affordable properties | 0 | 50 | 10 | 2 |

Anglicare ACT

4.6 What is adaptable housing and why is it important?

Adaptable housing units are designed in such a way as they are, or can be easily modified in the future to become, accessible to both occupants and visitors with disabilities or progressive disabilities. Current best practice in the design of adaptable housing is embodied in the Australian Standard AS 4299, published in 1995, and in Livable Housing Australia's Design Guidelines.

Livable Housing Australia outlines 7 core design elements of liveable housing, including:

1. A safe continuous and step free path of travel from the street entrance and/or parking area to a dwelling entrance and/or parking area to a dwelling entrance that is level
2. At least one, level (step-free) entrance into the dwelling
3. Internal doors and corridors that facilitate comfortable and unimpeded movement between spaces
4. A toilet on the ground (or entry) level that provides easy access
5. A bathroom that contains a hobless (step-free) shower recess
6. Reinforced walls around the toilet, shower and bath to support the safe installation of grabrails at a later date
7. A continuous handrail on one side of any stairway where there is a rise of more than one metre (Livable Housing Australia 2012).

Under Livable Housing Australia's requirements all 7 core design elements must be met in order to achieve the Silver performance level.

Under the Greenstar Communities Pilot up to four points are awarded based on the percentage of dwellings in the community that have achieved Silver level in accordance with Livable Housing Australia's 2010 guidelines. 50% compliance will achieve 1 point, 60% compliance achieves 3.4 points and 83% complying will achieve 4 points.

Research and international practice in adaptable housing is increasingly being broadened to include a number of related concepts such as flexible and universal housing and connected neighbourhoods. As the structural ageing of Australia's population places increasing pressure on the provision of social and economic infrastructure, the urban environment, transport and housing, it is important that planning for new neighbourhoods, as well as the construction of individual dwellings, is done so in the context of accessibility, adaptability and connectivity.

Common terms used in relation to adaptable housing include:

Universal:

Universal housing refers to homes that are practical and flexible, that meet the needs of people of different ages and abilities over time. A universally designed home generally avoids barriers that may discriminate against people living in or visiting the home. Universal housing is designed to be useable by most people over their lifetime without the need for major adaptation or specialised design. Universal design includes many of the features specified in AS 4299.

Accessible:

An accessible house is generally a purpose built dwelling for a person or persons with a disability. AS 1428.1 Design for Access and Mobility specifies design requirements applicable to new building work, but excluding work to private residences, to provide access for people with disabilities. AS 1428.1 is referenced by AS 4299.

Adaptable:

An adaptable house is a dwelling with design features that are adaptable to flex with the changing needs of the occupants, as specified by an Australian Standard. AS 4299 Adaptable Housing specifies performance requirements for adaptable housing. It includes three classification levels: a Class A adaptable house includes all essential and desirable features; a Class B house includes all essential and 50% desirable features; a Class C house includes all essential features.

Flexible:

Flexible housing is housing that can adapt to the changing needs of users. Definitions of flexible housing are typically broad and include the ability to adjust one's housing over time, to incorporate new technologies over time, to adjust to changing demographics, or even to completely change the use of the building from housing to something else. It is important to note that flexible housing relates to a wider category than that of adaptable housing, which as noted above is the term generally used to denote housing that can adapt to users' changing physical needs, in particular as they grow older or lose full mobility.

Livable:

A liveable home is designed and built to meet the changing needs of occupants across their lifetime. Liveable homes include key easy living features that make them easier and safer to use for all occupants including: people with disability, ageing Australians, people with temporary injuries, and families with young children. A liveable home is designed to: be easy to enter; be

easy to navigate in and around; be capable of easy and cost-effective adaptation, and; be responsive to the changing needs of home occupants (Livable Housing Australia, 2012).

Housing-for-life:

An important aspect of adaptable housing provision includes identifying a variety of house designs for different life stages and family sizes. Peoples needs change over time: young couples may have children and find they need a bigger space to live in; older people whose children have left the family home i.e. 'empty nesters' may find their house is too big for their needs but it is unviable to sell the property. These need to be considered so these key groups in the community are addressed. Housing must be able to respond to changing lifestyle needs.

5 Statutory and Policy Context

5.1 Federal Government

National Affordable Housing Agreement

The ongoing National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA), effective from December 2012, is a Council of Australian Governments (COAG) commitment to the provision of affordable, safe and sustainable housing for all Australians that contributes to social and economic participation.

The NAHA defines the objectives, outcomes, outputs and performance indicators, and clarifies the roles and responsibilities that guide the Commonwealth and the States and Territories in the delivery of services across the housing and homelessness services sector. The aspirational objective is that all Australians have access to affordable, safe and sustainable housing that contributes to social and economic participation.

The NAHA provides \$6.2 billion to states and territories to provide housing assistance to low and middle income Australians in the first five years.

National Rental Affordability Scheme

The National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) commenced on 1 July 2008, and sought to stimulate the supply of 50,000 new affordable rental dwellings by the end of June 2016. NRAS was a potential mechanism that the West Belconnen Project could have utilised for affordable housing development. However, the discontinuation of this scheme was announced in the 2014-15 Federal Budget. The Australian Government failed to articulate a strategy on housing for the nation as part of the 2014-15 budget with no new initiatives offered.

White Paper on Homelessness

Released in 2008, *The Road Home* White Paper on homelessness outlines the Australian government's vision for a "dramatic reduction in the number of people who become homeless" (FaHCSIA, 2008). The White Paper outlines the Australian Government's goal, with the agreement of state and territory governments, to halve overall homelessness by 2020.

In relation to housing affordability, the White Paper emphasises the link between the availability of affordable housing and homelessness. It particularly points to the importance of an increase in the supply of affordable housing in order to achieve its goal of a long-term reduction in homelessness.

Our Cities, Our Future: National Urban Policy

Our Cities, Our Future sets in place the Australian Government's objectives and directions for Australia's cities. It recognizes the critical roles that State, Territory and Local Governments, the private sector and individuals play in planning, managing and investing in cities.

The objectives and priorities that relate to affordability are summarized below:

- » To facilitate the supply of appropriate mixed income housing by:
 - > encouraging a range of housing types to suit diverse households across metropolitan areas;
 - and

- > supporting the development of aged persons accommodation, including medium and high care.

5.2 ACT Government

The Canberra Plan 2008

The Canberra Plan was first released in 2004, to guide the growth and development of Canberra. The Canberra Plan 2008, *Towards our second century*, continues to build on this strategy, and also responds to new challenges such as housing affordability.

The Plan identifies a nationwide increase in housing prices, and the impact that this has had on the ACT. The Plan highlights improving housing affordability in the Territory as one of its highest priorities. The strategies outlined in the Plan target land release, home ownership, private rental accommodation, community and not-for-profit housing, public housing and supported and aged accommodation.

Initiatives include facilitating home ownership through accelerated land supply and providing land rent, shared equity and financial concessions to ease the up-front costs of home ownership.

The Canberra Plan is supported by the Canberra Social Plan, the ACT Planning Strategy and the Affordable Housing Action Plan, discussed below.

Canberra Social Plan

The vision of the Canberra Social Plan 2011 is based on the themes of connection, belonging and collaboration. An important element of this vision identified within the plan is access to affordable, secure and appropriate housing.

The Plan highlights access to affordable and appropriate housing as a basic right, and identifies this as one of the ACT Government's highest priorities.

Diversity of housing is also identified as a key priority of the ACT Government, to meet the needs of people of all ages, abilities and lifestyles. The focus is on the development of sustainable, universally designed houses, apartments and town houses to enable ageing in place.

ACT Planning Strategy 2012

The ACT Planning Strategy 2012, *Towards 2030, looking to 2060*, establishes how the ACT will develop into the future to meet the aspirations of the people and the environmental, social and economic challenges of the 21st century. It is based on five outcomes (A to E) that the ACT wants to achieve and nine strategies to achieve them. It also addresses the challenges faced in Canberra currently and how these can be met. Outcome A and Strategy 3 specifically refers to housing, affordability and diversity as follows:

Outcome A: In 2030 Canberra will be a city that makes it easy for people to make more sustainable living choices and has the resourcefulness and capacity to manage change.

Within Outcome A, a key indicator is that there is greater diversity in the types of dwellings within each district in Canberra with an increasing percentage of attached housing.

Strategy 3: Provide more cost effective and sustainable living options by improving the existing housing stock and establishing more choice in housing types in a variety of locations.

Key actions for Strategy 3:

- » Investigate a schedule of incentives to reward residential developments that incorporate 'universal' dwelling design, more affordable housing and innovations that will improve environmental sustainability.

The Planning Strategy identifies West Belconnen as an urban investigation area. West Belconnen has great potential to substantially contribute to the achievement of these strategies.

Affordable Housing Action Plan Phase III 2012

Phase III of the Affordable Housing Action Plan introduces a set of 14 new actions aimed at improving housing affordability in the ACT. The key objectives of the plan are to increase the amount of affordable rentals, improve utilisation of land in established suburbs and expand the mix of affordable properties for sale. The outcomes of Phase I and Phase II have been incorporated into Phase III, which continues to require that 20 per cent of housing in greenfield developments is reserved to meet government affordable housing criteria.

Table 6 Actions in the ACT Affordable Housing Action Plan III

| Number | Action | How will West Belconnen contribute to these? |
|--------|---|--|
| 1 | Reduce land tax on properties with average unimproved land values between \$75,000 and \$390,000. | Purchasers at West Belconnen will benefit as the majority of blocks will be available between these price points. |
| 2 | Encourage institutional investment in affordable rental properties. | Opportunities exist for a variety of investors to provide affordable housing options at West Belconnen. With the abolition of the NRAS scheme other mechanisms to encourage this must be explored. |
| 3 | Increase the supply of affordable rental properties through transfer of land or surplus properties to the community housing sector. | Opportunities exist for the transfer of land to the community housing sector – including potentially a Community Land Trust. Pricing of the land will need to be determined with the ACT Government. However the land rent scheme may be applicable. The land could be released via the 'direct sale' method rather than placed on the open market |
| 4 | Investigate a requirement for the delivery of public and community housing stock in large infill and greenfield residential developments. | Opportunities exist for land to be made available for public and community housing stock. Discussions with both groups have indicated an interest in establishing in West Belconnen. |
| 5 | Provide grants to small clubs to assess the viability of their sites for residential | Not applicable |

| | | |
|----|--|---|
| | development. | |
| 6 | Assess and consider options for facilitating residential development on underutilised community facility sites. | Not applicable |
| 7 | Offer a lease variation charge remission to facilitate redevelopment or adaptive reuse of commercial accommodation that delivers affordable housing. | Not applicable |
| 8 | Introduce variable thresholds for affordable housing based on dwelling size. | Government mechanism. Would apply to West Belconnen. |
| 9 | Commence abolition of stamp duty. | Government mechanism commencing in 2012-13 budget and continuing in the 2014-15 budget which also saw the introduction of the Over 60s Home Bonus Scheme provides concessions for people over the age of 60 who may find stamp duty an impediment to downsizing and moving to accommodation more suited to their needs. Canberrans eligible for full concession will only pay \$20 in stamp duty. |
| 10 | Increase property and income thresholds for the Home Buyer Concession Scheme. | Government mechanism. Could apply to purchases at West Belconnen. |
| 11 | Explore options for extending the OwnPlace scheme into englobo and joint venture developments. | All OwnPlace house and land packages have now been allocated to eligible purchasers. However if the Government extends the program there are opportunities to deliver this scheme at West Belconnen |
| 12 | Investigate higher targets for affordable housing requirements in englobo releases. | Riverview are committed to exceeding the 20% target for affordable housing |
| 13 | Develop a Sustainable Land and Affordable Housing Guide. | Government mechanism. However Riverview could partner in the development of this guide |
| 14 | Release land for short term accommodation. | Opportunity exists to employ this mechanism at West Belconnen. The purpose of the short term accommodation would need to be determined along with potential funding and operational aspects. |

Source: ACT Government, 2011

The proposed development at West Belconnen will contribute to the achievement of the Affordable Housing Action Plan III in a variety of ways. The introduction to the market of a very large supply of housing through the rezoning of land at West Belconnen will have a significant impact on price based on the principle that as supply increases there is downward pressure on prices. This should thereby help to slow the rate of rise of house prices in the Territory. Other applicable measures have been highlighted in the table above.

5.3 NSW Government and Yass Valley Council

Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

The NSW *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act) provides the legislative framework for planning in New South Wales.

The provisions and maintenance of affordable housing is one of the objectives of the EP&A Act. The NSW Government supports and provides guidance on planning policies that encourage the development of affordable housing whilst taking into account the impacts on local needs and character.

The overall objectives of the EP&A Act are set out in Clause 5 and include:

“(a) to encourage:

- (i) The proper management development and conservation of towns and villages for the purpose of promoting the social and economic welfare of the community and a better environment,
- (ii) The promotion and co-ordination of the orderly and economic use and development of land,
- (iii) The provision and maintenance of affordable housing”

The plan-making provisions of the Act also state that local instruments may include arrangements for “providing, maintaining and retaining, and regulating any matter relating to, affordable housing” (s 26D).

When assessing a development application, a consent authority is required to consider any environmental planning instrument, or draft instrument, as well as “the likely impacts of that development, including environmental impacts on both the natural and built environments, and social and economic impacts in the locality” (s 79C). Such impacts could include the social impacts of development likely to reduce opportunities for low cost housing.

The EP&A Act also includes a provision that enables a consent authority, when granting consent to a development application, to include as a condition of that consent the dedication of land, or payment of monetary contributions, for affordable housing (s 94F-G). The provision applies with respect to a development application to carry out development within an area is a State Environmental Planning Policy identifies that there is a need for affordable housing within the area, and the proposed development:

- » is likely to reduce the availability of affordable housing within the area or
- » will create a need for affordable housing in the area or
- » is allowed only because of the initial zoning of a site, or the rezoning of a site.

Affordable housing is defined in the EP&A Act as “housing for very low income households, low income households or moderate income households, being such households as are prescribed by the regulations or as are provided for in an environmental planning instrument”.

Adaptable housing is not referred to in the Act.

The EP&A Act remains current, although it will likely be replaced by the Planning Bill 2013, discussed below.

NSW Planning Bill 2013

The NSW Government intends to introduce new legislation, the *Planning Bill 2013*, to replace the current *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*. The Bill is currently being considered within the NSW Parliament.

The proposed legislation will be an ‘enabling’ Bill that will establish the broad framework for the planning system. The Act will not include detailed prescriptive controls, instead these details will be covered by guidance and good practice advisory notes. The objectives of the Bill will emphasise in particular the role of planning in facilitating and managing growth and economic development.

The five pillars of the new system will be:

- » Community participation
- » Strategic planning
- » Streamlined approval
- » Provision of infrastructure
- » A ‘delivery’ culture

If passed in its current version, the Bill will include a number of components related to affordable housing.

The objects of the law will likely include: “promote the timely delivery of ... housing opportunities (including for housing choice and affordable housing)”.

Under the Bill, local plans may include planning control provisions to provide, maintain and retain affordable housing and encourage housing choice. The Bill also allows for developers to make voluntary contributions, under a planning agreement, for the provision of affordable housing (Shelter, NSW 2014).

The Bill includes an amendment regarding procedures that can be used when assessing development applications, to ensure that affordable housing is included. This amendment allows a consent authority (e.g. a local council or state-government agency) to impose an obligation on a developer to fund the provision of affordable housing (Shelter NSW, 2014).

NSW 2021

NSW 2021 is a 10 year plan prepared by the State Government to rebuild the economy, return quality services, renovate infrastructure, restore accountability to government, and strengthen the local environment and communities. It replaces the State Plan as the NSW Government’s strategic business plan.

NSW 2021 provides a clear mandate for sound urban planning that encourages an urban form consistent with the principles of new urbanism.

The plan contains 32 goals and 180 targets with priority actions to support the achievement of each target. Goal 5 of the plan is to ‘place downward pressure on the cost of living’ by providing support to people in need and dealing with the underlying causes of rising household costs. This

goal aims to increase the supply of land for housing and provide incentives to help make housing in NSW more affordable and housing stock more appropriate for people's needs.

Yass Valley Council Community Strategic Plan 2013 – 2030

Prepared by Yass Valley Council, the Community Strategic Plan 2013 – 2030 is intended to guide Council and address the long term needs of the community.

The Plan identifies the need for diversification of housing types within the region. The Plan also highlights the need to increase local availability of rental accommodation and affordable housing as a key priority for the future.

Yass Valley Local Environmental Plan 2013

The 2013 Yass Valley Local Environmental Plan (LEP) aims to make local environmental planning provisions for land in Yass Valley.

It outlines 11 aims of the LEP, one of which (2c) is to "encourage housing diversity" (Yass Valley Council, 2013).

5.4 Implications

Key points related to the statutory and policy framework are:

- » Housing affordability is a major challenge that requires a coordinated response from all levels of government, not-for-profit and the private sectors.
- » The supply of housing that is coordinated with infrastructure provision is essential for creating sustainable, accessible and viable communities.
- » Mechanisms employed in the West Belconnen project must be consistent and align with the broader policy frameworks of the ACT, NSW and Yass Valley Council. They must also be long range and flexible enough to fit within potential future changes to these frameworks.
- » Engagement with local communities, stakeholders and members of the public at the strategic planning stage plays an important role to ensure housing strategies are tailored to the local context and ultimately accepted by the community.

6 Mechanisms to Deliver Diverse, Affordable and Adaptable Housing

The provision of affordable housing is one of the biggest challenges facing many local areas across Australia. The process of securing the right type of affordable housing that meets local needs, in a manner that is compatible with local character, is complex and is strongly influenced by the local housing market, demographic, economic and development industry conditions.

A range of strategies are needed to respond to this challenge. According to the NSW Centre for Affordable Housing - Local Government Housing Kit (Housing NSW, 2014), these responses should:

1. **Stimulate** the provision of affordable housing
2. Better **match** the existing supply of affordable housing with the changes that are occurring in the profile of local households and their needs and preferences
3. **Increase** the overall supply of affordable housing, both lower cost market housing and a variety of forms of subsidised housing.

Agencies in all spheres of government can contribute to these strategies in various ways.

At the local level, awareness of the housing needs of local households and of prevailing trends in local and regional housing markets are particularly important in making plans and setting actions for new residential areas. Responding to housing affordability problems in the ACT means understanding the market processes that drive these problems.

To be most effective, initiatives at the local level need to be linked to policies and strategies being pursued by other levels of government, by the housing industry, and by not-for-profit housing providers (Housing NSW, 2014).

Although the ACT has higher than average incomes and a lower than average long term unemployment rate (see Affordable Housing Action Plan Phase III, p2), the strength in the purchase and rental markets means that housing affordability remains a key issue for many Canberra residents. The ACT Government's Affordable Housing Action Plan Phase III addresses some of the local affordability problems, which are relevant to the West Belconnen project.

In this section the potential mechanisms to deliver diverse, affordable and adaptable housing that may be relevant to the West Belconnen project have been grouped under the following categories:

- » Land use planning mechanisms
- » Financial strategies
- » Social housing: public housing and community housing
- » Partnerships
- » Community title
- » Land rent
- » Shared equity and community land trusts
- » Boarding houses and granny flats

6.1 Land Use Planning Mechanisms

Whilst the planning system alone cannot deliver affordable housing, it does play a major role in facilitating the delivery of new housing - thus helping to address mismatches between supply and demand - and can be used to help to stimulate the delivery of more affordable housing product. It can also help promote greater housing diversity in terms of size of units, location and price point.

However, planners do not build houses – there needs to be sufficient market demand from purchasers and capacity within the construction sector.

Research on national and international practices in planning for affordability suggests that planning approaches related to the delivery of new affordable housing can be grouped under five strategic objectives. Each of these planning mechanisms is most effective, and produces different results, in different local or regional housing markets and depending on whether the area is experiencing low, medium or high growth. The mechanisms and their applicability at West Belconnen are outlined in the table below.

Table 7 Land Use Planning Mechanism applicable at West Belconnen

| Mechanism | Application at West Belconnen |
|--|--|
| Mandatory inclusion - seeking a dedicated affordable housing supply in new developments | As a new development, the mandatory inclusion mechanism is relevant to West Belconnen. Mandatory inclusion of affordable housing is an objective of West Belconnen project. Riverview has committed to supply more than 20% of the development to meet the government's affordable housing criteria. |
| Increasing general housing supply through land supply and development policies | The scale of the development at West Belconnen, 11,500 dwellings in total, will play a significant role in increasing the general housing supply in the ACT and immediately surrounding area. |
| Encouraging new affordable housing through planning incentives and negotiated agreements | Use of direct sales and land rent can be applied at West Belconnen. Other mechanisms such as the Home Buyer Concession Scheme, reduction in stamp duty also apply. |
| Reducing barriers to affordable housing development | Barriers are being addressed through the Affordable Housing Strategy. Changes in Federal Government policy will also need to be considered. In the short term these are potential barriers to affordable housing delivery in West Belconnen and elsewhere. |
| Protecting and offsetting against the loss of low-cost housing. | Not applicable. West Belconnen will not result in the loss of any low cost housing |

6.2 Financial Strategies

Financial strategies are one element of a structured package of financial and non-financial levers used to finance and deliver affordable housing. A wide range of financial strategies can be employed by governments, financial intermediaries and housing providers to support the growth of affordable housing (Milligan *et al*, 2009).

Some of these financing mechanisms include:

- » Grants
- » Discounted land price
- » Public loans
- » Protected circuits of savings for specified investments
- » Superannuation funds invested in affordable housing
- » Private loans
- » Interest rate subsidies
- » Tax privileged private investment
- » Tax privileges for providers of affordable housing
- » Government secured private investment.

One of the strongest emerging trends is the use of mixed public and private finance (Milligan *et al*, 2009). In particular, not-for-profit housing developers are emerging as an important player in the development of affordable housing. Until May 2014 not-for-profit housing developers could access additional revenue streams through the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) to subsidise development and deliver more affordable dwellings. With the scrapping of this scheme in the 2014-15 Federal budget the ability of many not-for-profit housing developers to expand their portfolio may be limited. The cessation of the scheme may also reduce the likelihood of the new not-for-profit housing developers emerging. This may make the development of significant numbers of affordable dwellings difficult in the short term at West Belconnen. However use of other mechanisms such as superannuation funds should be explored in more detail.

CHC Affordable Housing

Existing community housing providers are beginning to finance projects by using assets as security for loans and further investment. This approach is being used by Compass Housing in NSW and CHC Affordable Housing in the ACT.

Discussions with CHC have indicated that they may be interested in a joint venture opportunity at West Belconnen and are interested in engaging with Riverview during rezoning to discuss opportunities in more detail. The model used at Crace is unlikely to be attractive to CHC for West Belconnen.

CHC have indicated that they would be interested in providing affordable retirement living in the form of independent living units – not high care. This development of this type of project would be beneficial for West Belconnen. The demographic research undertaken by the Institute of Governance at the University of Canberra for the West Belconnen project revealed that as much as 20% of the ACT's population could be 65 or older by 2041. Orima's research also indicated that downsizing was a significant trend with more people wanting to downsize their house or block than upsize. Of potential purchases 25% gave 'require a smaller home' as a reason for moving. The reason behind this downsizing was related to both cost and ageing.

CHC are somewhat constrained in their operations at the present time. Due to a heavy capital program for calendar years 2016 to 2019 they may be unable to progress any new development in the early stages of West Belconnen. They are also constrained in their area of operation to the ACT at present by a loan agreement. However by the time the West Belconnen development crosses the border CHC may be able to operate in NSW.

6.3 Social Housing: Public Housing and Community Housing

There has been considerable confusion over the terms 'public housing' and 'community housing' and they are often used interchangeably. To bely the confusion ACT Shelter has described the difference:

Public housing is housing that is subsidised, managed and owned by government, which is intended to ensure that people on low incomes or otherwise disadvantaged in the housing market can access safe, appropriate and affordable housing.

Community housing is an additional social housing option to public housing. It is distinct from public housing because it is provided by (not-for-profit) non-government agencies, and because tenants in community housing are eligible for Commonwealth Rent Assistance (ACT Shelter, 2013, p8).

The terms together can be referred to as social housing.

Between 1997 and 2007 the number of public housing properties in Australia fell by 30,000, while over the same period the population grew by over 2 million (Wood and Ong, 2012). Although the ACT has more public housing stock than other states and territories, stock growth has not kept pace with population growth (ACT Shelter, 2014). Despite significant investment in social housing through various government funding packages including the Nation Building and Jobs Economic Stimulus Package (where more than 400 new public housing dwellings were constructed in the ACT), Australia still has fewer public housing units than in 1996. Overall there is less low cost rental housing to go around. Waiting times for ACT public housing in 5 May 2104 were:

Table 8 Waiting Times for ACT Public Housing

| Application Category | Waiting List | Average Waiting Times (days) |
|----------------------|--------------|------------------------------|
| Priority housing | 137 | 119 |
| High Needs Housing | 1,493 | 681 |
| Standard Housing | 697 | 741 |
| Total | 2,327 | |

ACT Government Community Services Directorate [Online http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/hcs/social_housing/waiting_lists. Accessed 14 May 2014]

Australians for Affordable Housing, a coalition of national housing, welfare and community sector organisations, report that there are currently 173,000 Australians waiting for public housing (AIHW, 2010) and an overall shortage of 493,000 low cost rental properties that are available to low income households (NHSC, 2010).

Public housing in Australia has become 'residualised'. This means properties are increasingly allocated to tenants with high and often multiple/complex needs and rents are income based. The result has meant that state and territory housing authorities have been under increased pressure, with around 80% of Australian public housing tenants in the 'high need' category (in the lowest 20% of income) (Jacobs, et al., 2010).

One of the emerging solutions has been stronger federal and state support for expanding affordable housing provision through growing the non-profit community housing sector (Milligan et al., 2009).

Community housing offers secure, affordable, long-term rental housing for people on low to moderate incomes, with a housing need. The types of community housing providers include housing associations, housing co-operatives, religious/faith-based providers and crisis accommodation providers.

Not-for-profit community housing organisations have a charter to manage housing for low-to-moderate income and special needs households. Many of these organisations have built their internal capacity, raise private finance, employ skilled senior staff, and have started to operate over wider jurisdictions (Gilmour, 2009). They have specific skills and experience in tenancy and property management of affordable housing.

With more than 900 community housing organisations in Australia, there are many opportunities for the private sector, government, or both, to partner with community housing providers to deliver affordable housing. The role of partnerships between the public, private and not-for-profit sectors in housing and urban policy has been stimulated by policy initiatives such as the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA), National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) as reforms to encourage diversity and growth among community housing providers.

According to ACT Shelter (2013), the ACT has the highest proportion of social housing in the country with 8% of households living in public housing. Community housing providers manage more than 662 dwellings and the government manages 11,063 public housing dwellings (ACT Shelter, 2013, p17). There are six organisations managing community housing in the ACT and reporting to the ACT Government:

- » Havelock Housing Association (HHA)
- » Environmental Collective Housing Organisation (ECHO)
- » Capital Community Housing (CCH)
- » Argyle Community Housing
- » Tamil Senior Citizens Association
- » Salvos Housing

These community housing organisations are funded by the ACT Government. For most, if not all, their ability to expand their operation into West Belconnen will be dependent upon additional ACT Government funding and the organisations interest in expansion.

Some community housing is charged at 74.5% of market rent while some is charged at the same rate as public housing i.e. 25% of income. If eligible, some community housing organisations may require tenants to pay an amount equivalent to 100% of any Commonwealth Rent Assistance entitlement. They may also charge tenants a rental bond. Housing ACT may be able to provide a bond loan to assist with access to community housing

Some community housing organisations also offer group share options, where tenants have their own bedroom but other facilities such as the bathroom, kitchen and laundry may be shared. Whilst Orima's research found that alternative housing affordability initiatives e.g. shared kitchens and laundries were received unfavourably for home purchases they are more likely to be considered favourably by the low and moderate income renters as detailed in the Anglicare Australia study (see section 4.5).

CHC Affordable Housing is not included in the list above as it has a unique funding model. CHC Affordable Housing is a well-known provider of affordable housing in the ACT and describes themselves as a not-for-profit development company that delivers affordable properties for sale and rent to the ACT community. They were established in 1997 as a peak not-for-profit housing organisation with the ability to construct dwellings to be managed by other community housing providers. Their mandate changed over time to include affordable private sale and the management of affordable rental tenancies, charging up to 74.9% of market rent. CHC Affordable

Housing works within the framework of the ACT Government's *Affordable Housing Action Plan*, and successfully utilises and benefits from the ACT Government's Land Rent Scheme to deliver affordable rental housing. More information on the potential role CHC Affordable Housing could play at West Belconnen is available section 6.2.

6.4 Partnerships

Partnerships between community housing providers, state and local government, not-for-profit organisations and the private sector can be successfully utilised in the delivery of affordable housing. A diverse range of models and frameworks are being developed in Australia and overseas that encourage collaboration in long-term partnerships on the grounds of mutual benefit. Collaboration provides a basis for innovation, skills transfer and transformation of traditional structures and frameworks for implementation (Pinnegar, *et al.*, 2011).

The role of partnerships between the public, private and not-for-profit sectors in housing and urban policy has been stimulated by policy initiatives such as the NAHA, NRAS and other reforms to encourage diversity and growth among community housing providers.

NRAS in particular has provided a clear direction in terms of commitment to growth in the community housing sector and a view that not-for-profits should play a leading role. However, the partnership models being explored in the context of NRAS remain at an 'emerging' rather than an 'established' stage (Pinnegar, *et al.*, 2011). This means that there is space for innovation in partnership models. Pawson *et al.* (2013) point to the examples of local governments in Port Philip, Brisbane and City of Salisbury who have spearheaded innovative partnership models for the delivery of submarket rents to targeted groups. A wide range of models are emerging that aim to bridge investor need and policy objectives for the provision of affordable housing.

Partnership mechanisms, in enabling a greater role for community housing providers, have been generally well-received. A recent study conducted by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute has found that a clear majority of tenants found that community housing offers a more personalised, responsive style of provision, and may contribute to place- and community-building efforts (Pawson, *et al.*, 2013).

A partnership approach, using the other mechanisms listed in this section, is likely to be an effective way to deliver affordable housing in West Belconnen. In particular, a partnership between the developer, the government and a community housing provider should provide a powerful mechanism to deliver affordable housing for West Belconnen. As indicated in section 6.2 CHC Affordable Housing could potentially be interested in a partnership at West Belconnen.

6.5 Community Title

Strata Community Australia (2014) describes community title as property which has been divided into individual lots with common areas and shared services. Developers are increasingly opting to use community title as a means of establishing market differentiation and consumer appeal.

The developments can be highly complex because they involve not only the common property, but also the common services and additional responsibilities that go with the community common areas and non-common property. Community title schemes are normally responsible for their own roads, parks and gardens maintenance, garbage collection and potentially delivery of some utilities. Their funding comes from levies which are then used to run the scheme the same as strata schemes (Strata Community Australia, 2014).

Some schemes are so large they actually are a suburb in their own right. This means they have massive amounts of infrastructure to maintain. In some cases they are also required by the local

council to provide public access which can cause issues with insurance especially around public liability (Strata Community Australia, 2014). Furthermore, in community title developments community title levies as well as council rates are required. Because of this, residents may become uncertain about who is paying for what service and to whom (UDIA NSW, 2008).

The ACT Government's community title scheme applies 'when two or more separately owned lots share at least one communal space/amenities lot that is jointly maintained by the owners through a body corporate' (ACTPLA, 2014). ACTPLA provides the following examples:

- » an apartment building with each apartment owned separately, but with common property such as a swimming pool or gym
- » a group of townhouses, each owned separately, but with a common space such as parkland, swimming pool, children's park and BBQ area.

The ACT Government describes the following requirements for a community title in the ACT (ACTPLA, 2014):

- » The land involved in a community title scheme must be in a single area. It cannot be divided by anything other than a road, a body of water (other than a lake within the meaning of the Lakes Act 1976), or an area defined in the relevant regulations.
- » The community title scheme must be registered and include each of the lots involved in the scheme. The body corporate, which maintains the common property, is established on registration of a community title scheme.
- » A community title scheme development may be built in stages.
- » Undeveloped, partially developed or fully developed land may be included in a community title scheme. Lots may be added or removed from a community title scheme on approval of the Planning and Land Authority, provided at least three leases remain in a single area, one of which is common property.
- » Two or more community title schemes may be amalgamated subject to approval by the Planning and Land Authority.

Community titling does not automatically result in more affordable housing. In fact depending upon the facilities provided in the common space parkland, swimming pool, children's park and BBQ area, the size of the dwellings and the location amongst other factors this may be a less affordable option for many than a traditional title (Crown lease in the ACT).

It is unlikely that this would be a suitable option for West Belconnen unless an affordable housing provider was involved and the types of facilities are restrained.

6.6 Land Rent

In the ACT the Land Rent Scheme is part of the ACT Government's Affordable Housing Action Plan. The Land Rent Scheme gives a lessee the option of renting land through a land rent lease rather than purchasing the land to build a home. The ACT Government (2014) explains that:

- » Under the scheme, purchasers of a single dwelling residential block (previously unleased land) sold by the Land Development Agency (LDA) have the option of applying for the crown lease to be issued as a land rent lease. The advantage for potential lessees in taking up this option is the reduction of the up-front costs associated with owning a house. That is, lessees will not need to finance the cost of the land, only the costs associated with the transfer of the land (such as duty) and the construction of the home.

- » Land rented under a land rent lease is subject to payment of an annual land rent charge. In addition, the lessee will be liable to duty on the grant of the land rent lease, rates, and, if applicable, land tax.
- » Duty is payable on the land rent lease on the same basis as applies to the grant of a nominal crown lease. The dutiable value is not reduced by virtue of the lessees taking a land rent option.
- » As of 1 October 2013, entrance to the Land Rent Scheme is restricted to low to moderate income households eligible for the discount land rent rate of 2 per cent. The standard 4 per cent rate of land rent will no longer be available to new entrants to the Scheme.
- » Any new block of land released by the ACT Land Development Agency (LDA) to the public will be available for land rent.
- » Only single residential dwellings can be built on land rent blocks. Units or attached dwellings cannot be built on land leased under the scheme. Planning and quality controls applying to land rent blocks will be the same as for land held under traditional crown leases.

Purchasers at West Belconnen will be able to utilise the Land Rent Scheme under the rules applying at the time of purchase.

6.7 Shared Equity and Community Land Trusts

Shared equity is defined as the 'division of value of a dwelling between more than one legal entity' (Whitehead & Yates 2007, p.6). Shared equity enables a person to buy a share in their home when they cannot afford a mortgage on the current total value.

In 2010 the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute undertook research into shared equity schemes in Australia. The study *Innovative financing for home ownership: the potential for shared equity initiatives in Australia* examined two different models:

- » The *individual equity* model, which allows individual households to enter arrangements with equity partners in order to reduce mortgage repayments and the size of the deposit. At the time of sale, the partner recoups their equity loan plus a proportion of the capital gain. In some variants of this model there is an opportunity for households to *staircase* their way to ownership by progressively buying out their partner.
- » The *community equity* or *subsidy retention* model, which preserves ongoing affordability by limiting the resale value of properties through the use of a predetermined formula

AHURI found:

- » Shared equity schemes have the potential to facilitate home ownership for those households who may have difficulty purchasing a home through the open market.
- » Shared equity schemes vary in detail but broadly allow the consumer to obtain part equity in a home by sharing the overall cost with an equity partner—either a financial institution or a government backed provider. The involvement of an equity partner helps to reduce the overall costs involved in a mortgage, and thus improves housing affordability.
- » Variants of the individual equity model are currently operational in most Australian jurisdictions. Private-sector led products, such as the *Rismark-Bendigo* scheme, have been launched. More substantive engagement has occurred in jurisdictions where *government-backed* but arms-length agencies, such as *HomeStart* in South Australia (SA), remain an integral part of local institutional and mortgage finance frameworks.
- » There is consumer appetite for shared equity schemes in Australia, with particular interest in models that keep *normal home-ownership* within reach. For this reason, there is interest in

schemes that allow the consumer to: *staircase* up to full ownership at a later stage; choose their own house on the private market (rather than be limited to particular stock); and capture equity gains by selling into an open market.

- » Potential consumers distinguished between the individual equity model and the community equity model. They perceived the individual model as helping them become a normal, home owner, providing them with not only the security of ownership but with the potential of wealth creation.
- » The community equity model is perceived as an affordable, secure housing option and seen more as: a 'good idea, but not for me'. Key reasons included that it was 'more like renting, but you're getting a proportion of the rent back at the time you move out'. There was no potential to buy the equity partner out, and consumers were limited in terms of choice within the housing market.
- » Most of the shared equity schemes currently in place in Australia provide those features. Private sector institutional investors and lenders are interested in shared equity schemes, however private financiers remain cautious due to uncertainty and unfamiliarity with the product.
- » Government-backed agencies have been instrumental in driving innovation and establishing shared equity schemes, especially in states with a good track record of affordable home finance provision. Governments have offered supports and government guarantees to facilitate the creation of these schemes, however they operate on a commercial basis.
- » Purchasers need to have the long-term financial capacity to service housing related debt. Therefore targeted eligibility criteria are important. Schemes need to be geared towards those with incomes below, but not significantly below, median incomes and enable purchase of properties in the lower quartile to median price range. Shared equity schemes should not be driven by a policy to assist those in most housing need.
- » Shared equity schemes have yet to get a substantial track record in the eastern states.

The 2007 ACT Affordable Action Plan signalled that there may be an opportunity for shared equity to address affordable housing issues in the ACT. However at the present time a Shared Equity Scheme is available only for some public housing tenants. It is described as follows:

- » An alternative home purchase opportunity for social housing tenants. The Scheme began operating in May 2010 and has been made possible through a partnership between Housing ACT and IMB Limited.
- » The Scheme provides for eligible head tenants to purchase 70% of their Housing ACT property upfront, with IMB providing the finance. The remaining 30% equity of the property remains with Housing ACT. The purchaser agrees to progressively purchase this equity from Housing ACT over a maximum 15 year period.

Government leadership will be required for a broader shared equity scheme in the ACT unless a financial institution such as Bendigo Bank or IMB become involved. At this stage there are limited opportunities for West Belconnen to benefit from this scheme.

A **community land trust** is a type of shared equity housing. The Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute explains that community land trusts (CLTs) are a model of community-based, perpetually affordable housing that have been in operation in the United States for the past 30 years, established more recently in the United Kingdom, and being discussed in Australia as a possible affordable housing model (AHURI, 2014).

Crabtree *et al.* (2012) provide the following description of CLTs and their relevance to housing affordability in Australia:

Community Land Trusts (CLTs) are not property trusts as defined by Australian Trust law. CLTs are a form of common land ownership where land is usually held by a private non-profit organisation and leased on a long term basis to members of the community or other organisations. Buildings and services on that land are then held as owned or leased properties by residents, businesses and/or other community housing providers. Ground leases are inheritable, and properties on leased land can be bought and sold at prices determined by a resale formula spelt out in each CLT's ground lease. This arrangement can offer many of the widely acknowledged benefits of home ownership, including resident control over a dwelling, security of tenure and transfer of occupancy rights, and the potential for asset wealth building. CLTs are specifically designed to achieve these benefits under financing, pricing and regulatory arrangements that improve affordability for residents, while also protecting the long term affordability of the housing that is held for future generations. Various models of CLTs have succeeded overseas, especially flourishing in the United States of America (US) where there are over 200 CLTs currently in operation. These provide affordable rental housing, cooperative housing and resale-restricted home ownership. More recently, CLTs have begun to develop in the United Kingdom (UK), where the sector is growing rapidly.

CLTs may have widespread potential application in Australia to address affordable home ownership concerns, increase the range of housing tenure options available, foster community development and social capital, and maintain a stock of perpetually affordable housing options. CLTs simultaneously address affordability issues and foster and sustain an ongoing relationship between resident households and their community. This is because they carry a dual focus on ongoing affordability and community development that enables substantial flexibility in their operation. Hence, while largely promoted or perceived as a home ownership model, CLTs can and do provide boarding houses, affordable rentals, cooperative housing and mortgage home ownership, as well as community, commercial and open spaces. Most CLTs provide more than one of these tenures options across diverse portfolios of non-contiguous sites, and many partner with other organisations to address relevant issues in individual CLT jurisdictions, such as youth unemployment, drug and alcohol issues, food security, child care and so forth (Crabtree *et al.* 2012, p1).

Crabtree *et al.* (2012) further explain that there are a number of issues that would need to be considered for the model to be advanced in Australia, including legal, financial, governance, scale, context, viability, unfamiliarity and market issues. In relation to the ACT, the Crown owns all ACT land and banks lend on a 99 year Crown Lease arrangement. This may make the consideration of community land trusts more familiar for ACT residents since community land trusts normally operate on a 99 year lease arrangement (Crabtree *et al.* 2012).

There are currently no CLTs in Australia though a number of associations have formed in some jurisdictions to progress this model. Further investigation of this option may be warranted for West Belconnen.

6.8 Housing Cooperatives

The National Association of Housing Cooperatives (USA) describes a housing cooperative (co-op) as being:

formed when people join with each other on a democratic basis to own or control the housing and/or related community facilities in which they live. Usually they do this by forming a not-for-profit cooperative corporation. Each month they simply pay an amount that covers their share of the operating expenses of their cooperative corporation. Personal income tax deductions, lower turnover rates, lower real estate tax assessments (in some local areas), controlled

maintenance costs, and resident participation and control are some of the benefits of choosing cooperative homeownership (NAHC, 2014).

In a housing co-op a person owns shares in the co-op rather than owning real estate. Ownership of these shares gives the owner exclusive rights to live in one of the units established under an occupancy agreement and managed by the co-op. Monthly maintenance fees pay for the running costs of the property and the co-op, such as mortgages, taxes, insurances, etc. There are generally three types of housing co-ops:

1. Market rate housing cooperatives – shares can be bought or sold at market rate
2. Limited equity housing cooperatives – there are restrictions on the sales of shares, but is more affordable
3. Leasing, zero-equity or non-equity housing cooperatives – co-op leases from an investor, more affordable rent.

In Australia most housing cooperatives are non-equity and are available to low income residents eligible for social housing, which excludes moderate to higher income earners (Gilmour, 2012). Examples of long term cooperatives can be seen across Australia, however, as Gilmour explains: 'While cooperative housing will play only a boutique role in the affordable housing spectrum, it offers advantages that other housing providers have started to follow. Through involving residents in decision making, cooperative values are spreading across the wider community housing sector' (Gilmour, 2012, p1).

There are at least two cooperative housing developments in the ACT these include Urambi Village in Crozier Street, Kambah established in 1976 and Wybalena Grove in Cook established in 1975 by the Cook-Aranda Housing Co-Operative. They were developed by a group of people who wanted to explore the idea of 'living cooperatively' and/or saw the Cooperative as a means to reduce building costs by using the same materials and building at the same time. There are also a number of cooperative housing opportunities available for students through the Canberra Student Housing Cooperative.

Co-op housing is a possibility for West Belconnen. However actively pursuing the development of a co-op would not be a high priority in addressing housing affordability.

6.9 Boarding Houses and Granny Flats

Boarding houses usually provides tenants with an individual room and shared facilities, including kitchen, laundry, and often communal living rooms. These may be private or community owned. A study from the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute has found that boarding houses are valued by low-income Australians for affordability, convenient locations, flexibility, and access to services within walking distance (Jones *et al.*, 2007). Family-provided housing such as granny flats provides low cost housing for low-income older people, and has the potential to combine care, support and housing (Jones *et al.*, 2007).

In NSW boarding house funding is available through the NSW Centre for Affordable Housing's Boarding House Financial Assistance Program for Housing NSW. This funding stream offers grants to boarding house owners for fire safety upgrading. Housing NSW is considering expanding the Program to provide financial assistance to developers of 'new generation' boarding houses that provide self-contained boarding rooms, whether in new projects or as extensions to existing boarding houses. Responsibility for administration of the Program lies with the Centre for Affordable Housing. The Government also encourages retention of boarding house accommodation through the Office of State Revenue's land tax exemption for boarding houses.

Research undertaken for the West Belconnen project and by ACT Shelter for the project on older women's' housing vulnerability in the ACT revealed that there is not much appetite for boarding house accommodation.

Secondary residences such as granny flats and 'Fonzie flats' are another option for providing affordable housing. With the commencement of variation 306 to the Territory Plan secondary residences, most often referred to as granny flats, are:

- » developed only in association with single dwelling housing
- » the maximum dwelling size of a secondary residence is 90m. For the purpose of this rule, dwelling size is the floor area measured to the outside face of external walls (including internal walls between the living areas and garage) but excludes the garage
- » the minimum gross floor area of a secondary residence is 40m².
- » the minimum block size for secondary residence is 500m²
- » a secondary residence complies with Australian Standard AS 4299 Adaptable housing (Class C).
- » subdivision to provide separate title to a secondary residence, including subdivision under the Unit Titles Act 2001, is not permitted

The update of this option is likely to be primarily through private purchasers at West Belconnen. However community housing providers and Housing ACT may also be interested in this option to ensure a greater housing mix to meet client needs.

7 Recommendations

This section addresses the implications of the housing affordability mechanisms discussed in the previous section for the West Belconnen project. It centres on four key recommendations: land rent, community housing, public housing, and community land trusts. These mechanisms offer potential to meet the project vision and objectives while simultaneously achieving relevant credits under the Green Star – Communities PILOT rating tool. Alternative models, such as boarding houses and housing cooperatives, may become more relevant at a later stage of the development given their required proximity to established community services and facilities.

This part of the West Belconnen Community Plan is based on a strategic analysis of affordable housing options for West Belconnen, and has included preliminary consultation with agencies and other stakeholders. In order to meet the project vision and objectives further detailed analysis of preferred options and more detailed discussion with agencies, community housing and infrastructure providers will be needed during the rezoning and development process.

7.1 Land Rent

The Land Rent Scheme is part of the ACT Government's Affordable Housing Action Plan. The Land Rent Scheme gives a lessee the option of renting land through a land rent lease rather than purchasing the land to build a home. Under the scheme, purchasers of a single dwelling residential block (previously unleased land) sold by the Land Development Agency (LDA) have the option of applying for the crown lease to be issued as a land rent lease.

The advantage for potential lessees in taking up this option is the reduction of the up-front costs associated with owning a house. That is, lessees will not need to finance the cost of the land, only the costs associated with the transfer of the land (such as duty) and the construction of the home.

Land rent will be available for eligible purchases of ACT land.

7.2 Social Housing

Social housing (including both community and public housing) will be an important mechanism in the delivery of affordable housing in West Belconnen.

Opportunities exist to enter into an arrangement with CHC (a not-for-profit development company) to develop affordable housing at West Belconnen. CHC have indicated that they are interested in a possible joint venture at West Belconnen potentially including affordable retirement living (independent living units). Detailed discussion of opportunities would be welcomed during the rezoning and early development stages.

In addition to the provision of affordable rental housing by CHC there should also be discussion with the ACT Government (Community Services Directorate and/or Treasury) about the opportunity

of providing additional government funding to allow the existing or new community housing providers³ to develop/purchase and manage properties at West Belconnen. This would ensure:

- » that there is greater diversity in housing options reflecting differing needs and preferences of potential tenants,
- » a larger number of people will have access to affordable rental accommodation because there is greater supply and the income barrier (gross maximum income) applying to rental housing assistance is broadened (CHC has a higher maximum income level than government subsidies social housing).

If the ACT Government indicate that additional funding may be available discussions should commence with the existing providers to determine their interest in expanding their operations to West Belconnen. If existing providers are not interested, providers from NSW could be approached.

If funding is not available from the ACT Government other means should be examined in more detail such as Superannuation funds. Alternatively this could be pursued concurrently to ensure that Riverview's affordable housing target is achieved.

Preliminary discussions with Housing and Community Services ACT have revealed an interest in pursuing public housing opportunities at West Belconnen. ACT Housing has a preference for purchasing blocks of land rather than a land and house package. Alternatively they could utilise a model where a large block of land is set aside specifically for public housing. This would be large enough to allow for up to 16 townhouses or houses in a row (or slightly higher if the development was to be targeted at aged public housing tenants). Dwellings would not be easily identified as public housing and would be built to a contemporary design with universal/liveable design features. Public housing should be salt and peppered through the development but close to public transport and employment, community facilities and shops. As with CHC, detailed discussion of opportunities would be welcomed during the rezoning and early development stages. The discussions with Housing and Community Services ACT could also progress the community housing issue detailed above.

7.3 Community Land Trust

There are two community land trust (CLT) models with potential in the Australian context (Crabtree *et al.* 2013). The first of these is a long-term leasehold model, where the CLT is the registered owner of the premises (house and land) and grants a long-term lease to an eligible resident who will become the CLT lessee. While this model is viable in NSW, it is not currently possible to implement long-term leasehold CLTs in the ACT. The second option is a shared equity model where the CLT and the resident share ownership of the property and any house erected on the land. This model is viable in both NSW and the ACT. However the implementation of a community land trust model would require further investigation as there is a range of legal, financial, governance, scale, viability, and market issues to consider. Given the complexity of introducing this model into Australia further work is required to determine its applicability to West Belconnen. The proposed company and board that is to be established to oversight the environmental trust could be tasked to look into this in more detail.

³ These community housing providers report to and are funded by the ACT Government, whereas CHC is a not for profit development company that reports to a Board. Whilst the business models are different, their primary purpose is the same i.e. to provide affordable rental accommodation

7.4 Innovation

West Belconnen provides the ACT Government with the opportunity to showcase innovative approaches to affordable housing delivery. In addition to the approaches highlighted above there are also opportunities for West Belconnen to demonstrate innovation through the:

- » use of alternative and more affordable building techniques and materials
- » adoption of policies/codes to facilitate the delivery of quality housing on smaller lots (with conceivably no minimum area requirements) compact dwelling typologies on lots in the 150m² to 350m² range) that will contribute to overall housing diversity, meet the increasing demands of smaller households, improve the sustainability of communities and deliver improved housing affordability.

The Land Development Agency, as the developer, should explore opportunities for the delivery of affordable “for sale” dwellings at West Belconnen with the planning authority and other key stakeholders such as the HIA and MBA.

Riverview and the LDA should aim to include a demonstration project in the early stage of the development.

7.5 Private sector investment and alternative housing models

Riverview and the ACT Government should maintain an ‘open-door’ policy to attract private sector investors and groups interested in alternative housing models for example co-operative housing organisations. Actively pursuing these groups is not warranted at this stage with land rent and the various social housing options available. If the affordability targeted is not being met Riverview and the ACT Government may wish to investigate a more active marketing approach to attract these groups.

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1 Executive Summary

The proposed new community at West Belconnen (the Project), which straddles the ACT/NSW border, will be a sustainable community of international significance in the nation's capital. Riverview Projects (ACT) Pty Limited (Riverview) is managing the Project for the Land Development Agency in the ACT and on behalf of the NSW landowners. Guiding principles related to partnering, evaluation, ecological themes, socio-cultural themes, and economic themes bind relevant parties associated with the Project to achieving West Belconnen's sustainability goals.

The new community will exist amongst several significant environmental features, including the Murrumbidgee River, iconic views to the Brindabella Ranges, Ginninderra Falls, and habitats of nationally and regionally significant conservation interest. In recognition of this environmental significance, a substantial corridor of land adjacent to the Murrumbidgee River and Ginninderra Creek will not be developed. Rather, it will be set aside for conservation, bushfire management, recreation, education, tourism, and other community benefits. It will be the only access to the Murrumbidgee River on the north side of Canberra.

Given the cross-border nature of this project, Riverview proposes setting up an environmental trust (the Trust) to manage the corridor and ensure its integration with the new community and beyond in perpetuity. Similar trust arrangements have emerged in Australia and overseas where commercial opportunities are married with land management priorities to support long-term conservation gains and cover reserve running costs.

The pre-eminent objectives of the Trust would be conservation of natural values and bushfire fuel management. Other objectives pertaining to education, research, recreation, tourism, and community involvement would also inform Trust operations. The Trust would be administered by a company (the Company) with a skills-based board comprising government, community, and other relevant stakeholder representatives. A Land Management Committee, a Social Sustainability Committee, and a Public Fund Committee would be set up to ensure objectives pertaining to land management, community engagement, and funds management are achieved, respectively.

The Land Management Committee would be responsible for upholding and reviewing a plan of management that meets legislative obligations and provides for conservation of natural values and bushfire fuel management. It would provide technical advice as necessary, manage recreational uses of the land, and facilitate tertiary-level research opportunities in the corridor.

The Social Sustainability Committee would be responsible for ensuring participatory process through liaising with residents regarding community aspirations and priorities, informing the community about activities, facilitating community participation in events, and managing volunteers interested in contributing to management of the corridor.

The Public Fund Committee would assist with the financial sustainability of the Trust by recommending to the board how budgets are allocated and spent and by investigating fundraising opportunities. Such opportunities may be through government grants, various types of private contributions, or through other forms of social enterprise within West Belconnen.

The Project would deliver, through a staged approach, the initial capital works within the corridor and absorb any related costs until such assets are handed over to the Trust. The Trust would earn annual income for its operations through the contribution of a percentage of sale proceeds from NSW lots and an annual contribution from the ACT Government equal to those costs of managing the ACT portion of the corridor.

2 The West Belconnen vision

The proposed new community at West Belconnen (the Project) lies amongst several significant environmental features, including the Murrumbidgee River and Ginninderra Creek, Ginninderra Falls, iconic views to the Brindabella Ranges, and rare flora and fauna. In recognition of this unique landscape, the West Belconnen vision is to develop *a sustainable community of international significance in the nation's capital*. The vision continues to be reviewed and endorsed through ongoing community engagement.

The vision statement is underpinned by detailed sustainability objectives which were developed by Riverview in collaboration with government stakeholders and the broader community (Appendix A). The Heads of Agreement between the ACT Government, the Corkhill Bros Pty Ltd and Reid & Stevens Pty Ltd, (a Corkhill Company) in respect of the land referred to here as West Belconnen, binds the parties to develop the land in accordance with these sustainability objectives.

The objectives include a range of guiding principles based on partnering, evaluation, ecological, socio-cultural, and economic themes. Several of these principles address how the new community and its infrastructure will relate to its environmentally significant surroundings:

- Designing the project for community ownership and ultimate community control;
- Acknowledging the intrinsic value of all species and the special role and regional significance of the Murrumbidgee River corridor and Ginninderra Creek;
- Respecting and supporting the ecosystem functions of air, soil, and water, recognising the importance of living and non-living environmental resources;
- Fostering a deep sense of respect for and connection to the land, flora, and fauna;
- Respecting and honouring Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural, historical and spiritual values, including integrating with the existing rich, social fabric of Belconnen; and
- Instilling awareness and supporting education of sustainability values, technology and lifestyles.

A series of ecological surveys of the West Belconnen site conducted between 2011 and 2013 have led to a substantial area of land along the Murrumbidgee River and Ginninderra Creek being identified as areas of conservation significance and thus not to be developed (Figure 1). These areas of conservation significance, including tracts of endangered box-gum woodlands and habitat for the endangered Pink-tailed Worm Lizard, are referred to as the conservation 'corridor' for the purposes of this document.

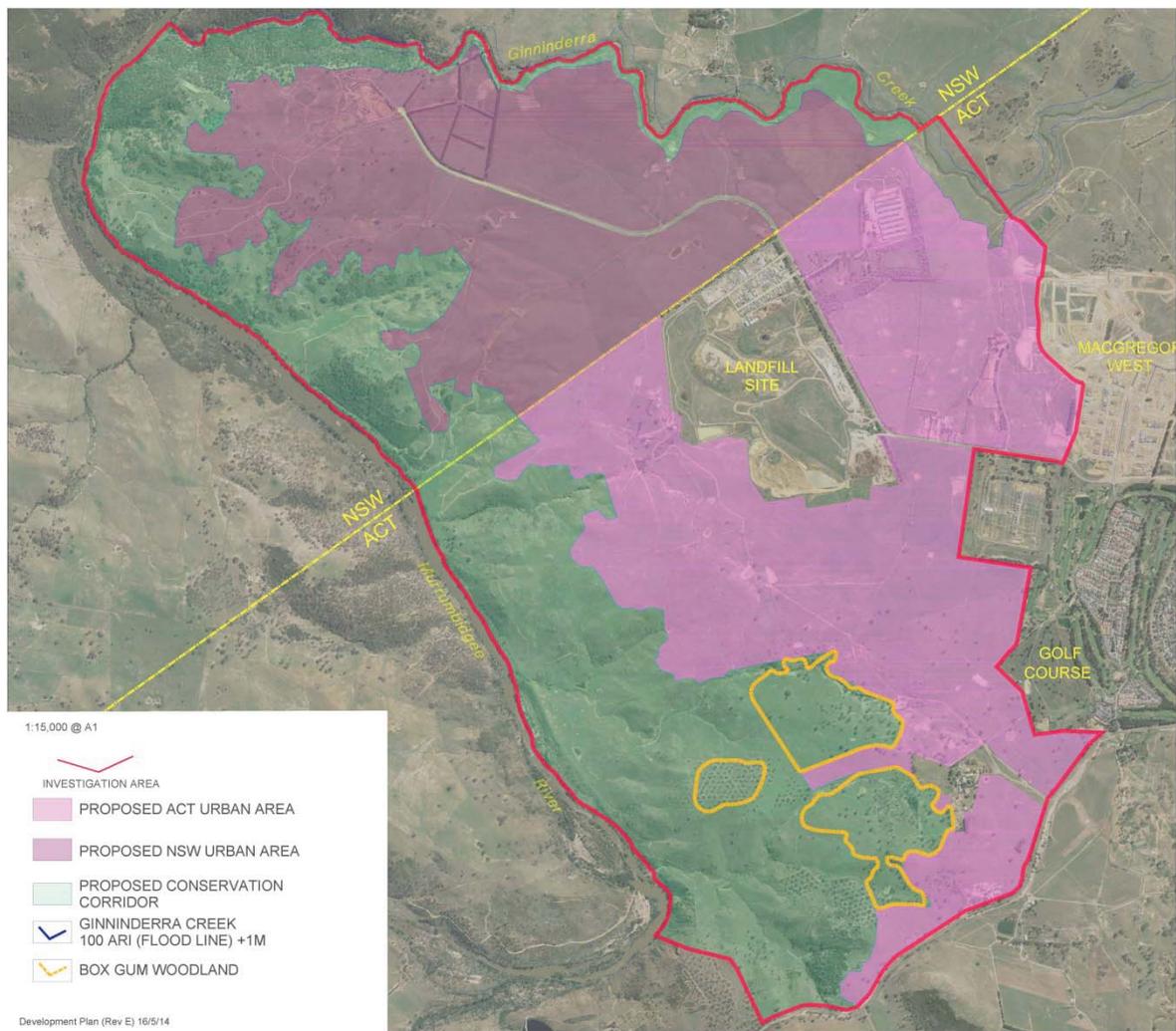


Figure 1. The West Belconnen site (outlined in red), showing the proposed corridor in green (generally the land between the Murrumbidgee River and the proposed urban areas shown in purple). The section of the corridor comprising box-gum woodlands is outlined in orange. Map contributed by Knight Frank.

The studies that determined the boundary of this conservation corridor include:

- » Kevin Mills & Associates (2009). *West Belconnen Project ACT & NSW Land Flora and Fauna Studies, January 2009.*
- » Kevin Mills & Associates (2009). *Further Flora and Fauna Studies, Land at West Molonglo and Ginninderra Creek.*
- » Kevin Mills & Associates (2013). *West Belconnen Project NSW Land Flora and Fauna Studies, September 2013.*
- » Kevin Mills & Associates (2013). *West Belconnen ACT Parkwood Land Flora and Fauna Assessment, December 2013.*
- » Kevin Mills & Associates (2013). *West Belconnen Project ACT and NSW Land Targeted Bird Surveys, September 2013.*
- » Kevin Mills & Associates (2014). *Studies into the Biological Environment West Belconnen Project Area Australian Capital Territory.*

- » Nash, K. & Hogg, D. (2013). *West Belconnen Woodland Areas Confirmatory Ecological Assessment, May 2013.*
- » Osborne, W. & Wong, D. (2013). *The extent of habitat for the vulnerable Pink-tailed Worm Lizard (*Aprasia parapulchella*) in the West Belconnen – Ginninderra Creek investigation area – confirmatory distribution surveys and mapping, 10 May 2013.*
- » Rowell, A. (2013). *West Belconnen Golden Sun Moth surveys, October to December 2012.*

The reservation of these lands for conservation purposes has been broadly endorsed through the community engagement process.

3 The West Belconnen Environmental Trust

Guided by the principles of the West Belconnen sustainability vision, it is proposed to set up an environmental trust (the Trust) to achieve objectives relating to conservation, bushfire management, heritage management, education, tourism, and recreation within the conservation corridor. This chapter sets out why an environmental trust is an appropriate structure given the cross-border nature of the development, the opportunities to harness alternative investment sources, and the aspirations for strong community involvement.

The case for an environmental trust

There are a variety of common models for maintaining and improving high quality environmental assets, including:

- » Formal protection in a state or territory managed conservation estate (e.g. 'National Parks');
- » Formal protection on private lands through the use of covenants or other legal instruments (e.g. biodiversity offsets or conservation covenants placed on land titles);
- » Protection on private lands by not-for-profit/private organisations purchasing and managing the land for conservation outcomes (e.g. Bush Heritage Australia, Australian Wildlife Conservancy);
- » Protection within state or territory owned lands primarily managed for other asset values (e.g. water catchments, state forests); and
- » Dedication to local government or similar authority for incorporation into an open space network (e.g. local reserves, recreation areas).

The ubiquitous and often-stated challenge in each of these models is securing funding for the long-term, 'in perpetuity' costs to maintain and in some cases enhance the biodiversity values for which the asset was originally protected.

Recently in Australia and overseas a new form of conservation trust has begun to emerge, one where commercial opportunities are married with land management priorities, to support long-term conservation gains and cover reserve running costs. Examples of this emerging model include:

- » Capital Woodlands and Wetlands Conservation Trust (recently established to support management of two reserves in the ACT) www.cwwct.org.au;
- » The Fiordland Conservation Trust (established in 2007 to manage specific patches of land) <http://www.fiordlandconservationtrust.org.nz/>;
- » The Kea Conservation Trust (established in 2006 to work across the landscape) <http://www.keaconservation.co.nz/about-us/>;
- » The Sky Rail Rainforest Foundation (established in 2005 to leverage the Sky Rail development in Cairns) <http://www.skyrailfoundation.org/>; and
- » The Lake Cowal Foundation (established in 2000 to support management of lands at Lake Cowal in western NSW leveraging a gold mine development) <http://www.lakecowalfoundation.org.au/>.

Given the unique balance between conservation and commercial opportunities in these models, more often than not, they are successfully run as a partnership between the community, stakeholders and governments, usually through a company (non-government organisation) legal structure. How a similar structure may take on the management responsibilities of the corridor at West Belconnen is described later in this paper.

Seizing opportunities for West Belconnen

Referring to the common models for conservation mentioned previously, it is usually the case that the relevant local or state/territory authority assumes ownership and management responsibilities of high quality conservation assets. This typical arrangement, however, may be unsuitable for the corridor at West Belconnen given the cross-border nature of the development and its governing principles of enhanced community involvement and connecting the West Belconnen residents with the Murrumbidgee river environs.

Traditional conversion to a public reserve would fail to take advantage of opportunities relating to recreation and community involvement. Other opportunities related to donations, grants, partnership opportunities, and other private (e.g. corporate) support for land management would also be missed. There would be no clear mechanism for the West Belconnen community to invest in and manage the conservation area. This lack of incentive risks creating a line of severance between the 'people' of the developed area and surrounding suburbs and the 'nature' of the conservation lands.

The conservation corridor at West Belconnen is significant for a variety of social, cultural, and environmental reasons. Work is needed to protect and restore habitat for threatened flora and fauna and to ensure that the corridor maintains an effective asset protection zone for bushfire fuel management. At the same time, the West Belconnen community and those from further afield wish to benefit from the range of recreational and educational opportunities the lands would provide. Bushwalking, canyoning, canoeing, fishing, and visiting Ginninderra Falls are just some of the opportunities provided by the landscape that would facilitate connections between the conservation corridor, residents of West Belconnen and beyond. In fact, the corridor would be the only direct access to the Murrumbidgee River (downstream of its confluence with the Molonglo River) for the entire north side of Canberra.

An effective cross-border solution

West Belconnen is proposed to straddle the ACT/NSW border, and at final build-out the development will extend seamlessly across the border. For the corridor, therefore, it would mean that governance and management must align on both the ACT and NSW sides of the development. Returning the lands to public tenure would likely result in management of the lands by two different agencies and thus two sets of management objectives, strategies, personnel, responsibilities, and funding streams.

Furthermore, public land management agencies are continuously pressed and express public concern that they are expected to do more with fewer resources. A framework is needed that not only unifies management of the corridor across the border, but also ensures its ongoing protection given that public agencies may be reluctant to shoulder the responsibility.

An innovative framework is needed for governing the corridor that unifies management across the border and that secures the financial support necessary to manage the corridor as necessary to meet the broad range of expectations the community has for it. Furthermore, management needs to enhance and protect the natural environment, contain threats such as bushfire, enable enjoyment of the corridor by all Canberrans, unlock tourism opportunities, and give the community of West Belconnen and beyond a direct role in decision-making.

The newly-created Trust would 'own' the corridor on both sides of the border and manage it according to a single plan of management (discussed further shortly) and funding stream. Ownership would be a rural lease in the ACT and freehold in NSW. The Trust would seek legal advice to ensure details of its ownership allow for effective management of public access and public liability concerns. These further details of ownership and management arrangements, including how ownership and management of the corridor will be handed over to the trust progressively as the development proceeds, will be outlined in a forthcoming concept plan and corridor plan of management.

The rest of this chapter describes how the Trust would operate and manage the corridor in accordance with the West Belconnen project vision.

Proposed objects of the Trust

The Trust would provide an effective cross-border tenure arrangement that allows for environmental management of the corridor and enables residents of West Belconnen (both NSW and ACT) and beyond to access the corridor for recreation and enjoyment. It also delivers the necessary flexibility to enable West Belconnen residents to participate in conservation activities and direct decision-making as the new community matures.

Objectives for the Trust would be set out in the Trust deed. The pre-eminent objectives would be to deliver conservation and bushfire management activities within the corridor. These activities would be governed by a plan of management that provides for:

- » Identification and assessment of the natural values of the corridor (baseline data);
- » Management action to conserve the natural values, for example through mitigation of threats to these values and active restoration;
- » Management action for bushfire protection;
- » Management action for other identified objectives, such as to support identified recreational activities or maintain capital works (may require a separate Capital Works and Maintenance Program);
- » Enhanced landscape connectivity within and beyond the West Belconnen region, including the existing riverine corridors in the ACT and NSW;
- » An activities declaration to assist with managing public access;
- » Monitoring, evaluation, and public reporting of management outcomes;
- » Review of the plan at regular intervals; and
- » Compliance with any relevant legislation and regulations.

Further details of plan of management protocols are given shortly. Other Trust objectives would be to:

- » Provide information or education about the corridor and broader considerations pertaining to the natural environment, which may include the establishment and management of a sustainability education centre in or near the corridor;
- » Allow for tertiary-level research into corridor flora and fauna and topics related to conservation, bushfire fuel management, and the like;
- » Allow and enable recreational activities, tourism activities, and associated capital works, on the conservation corridor that attract visitors, engage the local community, and are consistent with conservation of its natural values, while retaining any income derived from these activities;

- » Provide a mechanism for collecting contributions from the proceeds of development, as well as contributions from the ACT and NSW Governments and other parties;
- » Attract alternative sources of funding such as grants, donations, or other local social enterprise.

Ensuring effective corridor management

The pre-eminent objectives to be recognised in the Trust deed would be conservation of natural values and bushfire management. In recognition of the potential for conflict between these two objectives the Trust deed would incorporate management protocols (e.g. fuel load management, acceptable fuel load levels, etc.). These would be based on best available science and agreed between stakeholders prior to the commencement of Trust management activities.

The ownership or lease documentation for the corridor would contain the requirement that the corridor be managed according to a plan of management approved by appropriate authorities in both the ACT and NSW. The plan of management would be consistent with the prevailing bushfire operational plan and the requirements of the Murrumbidgee River Corridor as spelled out in the National Capital Plan

The initial plan of management for the corridor would be prepared as part of the Project prior to the formation of the Trust, and would build on the expert investigations already underway or completed as part of the rezoning and master planning processes. The plan would include the conservation and bushfire management protocols and arrangements to meet other objectives of the Trust including heritage management, recreation, and education. The plan would be reviewed at least every three to five years. A draft table of contents for the plan is provided at Appendix B.

4 Administration and operations of the Trust

Administration of the Trust

The project team considered the option of a company or cooperative (of West Belconnen residents and other interested stakeholders) delivering the Trust. Features of companies and cooperatives are detailed in the table below.

| Cooperative | Company |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » All members have one vote regardless of size of shareholding » Profits cannot be distributed to members, must be reinvested » Many business obligations related to finances, reporting, responsibilities of directors etc. similar to companies as much of the cooperatives legislation defers to the <i>Corporations Act 2001</i> (Cth) » Not a common business model » As of the time of writing, separate cooperatives would need to be registered in the ACT and NSW, although a harmonisation process is underway | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Voting rights distributed according to shareholding if limited by shares, or as per constitution if limited by guarantee » Can be registered for not-for-profit status, and deductible gift recipient (DGR) status, in which case profits cannot be distributed to members but must be reinvested » Companies are registered nationally under the <i>Corporations Act 2001</i> (Cth) |

It is proposed that a public company limited by guarantee (the Company) be set up to run the Trust. The Company would be able to operate effectively on both sides of the border and ensure representation from key stakeholders on its board (described shortly). Rather than having shareholders, the 'limited by guarantee' structure means the Company would have members who act as guarantors. As guarantors, members would give an undertaking to contribute a nominal amount (e.g. \$20) in the event of the winding up of the Trust.

Membership would be open to any interested persons. Members would have voting rights and would be able to nominate themselves for at-large director positions should they feel they have the required skills. More information on the proposed board is given shortly.

The Company would operate as a not-for-profit entity and pursue deductible gift recipient (DGR) status as an environmental organisation. It would administer the Trust fund in accordance with the Trust deed, the fund governance rules, and all applicable laws and regulations.

The board of directors

The Company board of directors would be a skills-based board responsible for administering the Trust and determining strategic program priorities for the conservation corridor. The board would have seven members, each with business management skills. One member must be an ACT Government representative and one member must be a NSW Government or Yass Valley Council

representative to ensure government interests on both sides of the border are included. One member must be an indigenous representative. The other four at-large directors would be drawn from the broader Company membership (although the government and indigenous directors may also take up membership should they wish). The board would ensure that in addition to business management skills, there are skills in conservation land management, accounting, and law amongst the board.

Should the board require certain additional expertise at any given time, it would draw on available funds/volunteers to invite the necessary expertise at said time. The board would meet monthly at or near the corridor.

The West Belconnen project manager (i.e. Riverview) would hold at least one of the at-large director positions until Project completion.

Board appointments would be for a three year period, with initial appointments for 3 or 5 years to stagger turnover.

Role of the board

The board would administer the Trust, drive strategic program priorities and policy, deliver sound business management, and ensure legislative obligations are met. It would set up and administer the various committees (described shortly) created to deliver Trust objectives.

The board would carry ultimate responsibility for legal obligations such as:

- » Overseeing the investment of funds from the Trust;
- » Monitoring the budget and managing accounting processes;
- » Preparing annual reports and commissioning audits as required; and
- » Ensuring compliance with work health and safety and similar obligations.

Committees for achieving Trust objectives

The board would set up a Land Management Committee, a Social Sustainability Committee, and a Public Fund Committee would be set up to deliver the Trust objectives (Figure 2). The Trust would also employ paid staff deemed necessary to achieve management objectives. More details as to the committees and operational staff now follow.

Company board of directors

Skills-based board responsible for strategic planning and long-term policy setting.
Representation from government and community.

Committees and staff relevant to the Trust given below.

| Land Management Committee | Social Sustainability Committee | Public Fund Committee | Staff or Contractors |
|--|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan of management • Technical advice • Research opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community education and outreach • Volunteer management • Sustainability Education Centre | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Trust budgets • Fundraising through grants, private sector opportunities, social enterprise | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrator • Field officers • Communications and public engagement officer |

Figure 2. Schematic of proposed Trust and Company governance structure.

Conservation, bushfire management, and other land management

A Land Management Committee would be formed that would implement the plan of management and undertake reviews of the plan as required. At any one time, the Land Management Committee would ensure its membership has skills or experience in conservation, bushfire management, and heritage management. Government agencies with particular interests such as ACT Emergency Services Agency, Yass Valley Council, ACT Territory and Municipal Services, NSW Department of Planning, Environment, and Local Government, and the like may nominate representatives to the Land Management Committee.

Other responsibilities of the Land Management Committee would include:

- » Developing plans for capital works and maintenance priority lists, and overseeing associated works;
- » Providing technical advice or liaise with appropriate professionals on conservation, bushfire management, heritage issues, and use of the corridor for recreation, education, and tourism;
- » Facilitate research opportunities through tertiary education providers (e.g. honours, post-graduate work), which may include:
 - > Effective protection of Pink-tailed Worm Lizard habitat and connectivity;
 - > Restoration of box-gum woodlands consistent with mitigation of fire fuel load accumulation;
 - > Extensive restoration of exotic pastures with native grassland; and
 - > Building a sustainable community through enhanced relationships between conservation lands and new housing estates.

The Land Management Committee would meet as needed but at least every two months.

Education and community involvement

The Trust will meet its objectives of community education and community involvement by establishing a Social Sustainability Committee. The Social Sustainability Committee would be responsible for:

- » Liaising with West Belconnen residents regarding community aspirations and priorities;
- » Informing the community about activities and progress;
- » Facilitating volunteering to support land management, education, recreation, and research activities;
- » Ensuring the inclusion of marginalised, underprivileged, or otherwise underrepresented groups in Trust programs;
- » Encouraging mechanisms to enhance community benefit, such as specifying a degree of local employment in any contracts to which the Trust agrees; and
- » Engaging in sustainability awareness education beyond the corridor such as sustainable living techniques, school-level activities, and managing the proposed sustainability education centre, should it deem such extended involvement appropriate.

The Social Sustainability Committee would meet as needed but at least once every two months.

Budgets and fundraising

While final responsibility for approving budgets and financial legislative responsibilities lies with the board, a Public Fund Committee would be established to work the mechanics of budgets and manage fundraising from sources other than the ACT Government and the sale of NSW lots (described further later in this paper). The Public Fund Committee would be responsible for:

- » Overseeing the implementation, management, and retention of revenues from the Tourism Destination Vision Plan for the corridor;
- » Allocating budgets to committee programs in accordance with approved plans, as well as capital, maintenance, promotional, educational, research, and any other identified programs;
- » Monitoring the budget;
- » Preparing annual reports;
- » Investigating and implementing any grants and gifts programs; and
- » Investigating opportunities for expanding operations to increase revenue through other social enterprises.

The Public Fund Committee would meet monthly.

Proposed staff

The Trust would employ full-time staff to undertake day-to-day administration of Trust activities. The administrator will liaise with the board and committees to determine ongoing staffing needs and take appropriate action to hire and manage staff as needed.

During the rezoning phase the project will develop further the concept plan and a plan of management. Based on the concept plan, the plan of management will take into consideration the high level operations matters and provide costings for management.

Necessary field staff would require enforcement powers akin to 'conservation officers' to deliver management actions, to ensure activities within the corridor align with the plan of management, and otherwise manage public access to and use of the corridor. Issues related to managing public access, the requirements of field staff, and the like will be explored in greater detail and described

in a forthcoming paper about management of the corridor. A communications and public engagement officer would also likely be necessary to coordinate volunteers and promote community involvement in Trust activities. These roles may be full or part time or sub-contract staff.

5 Funding the Trust

Resourcing initial capital works

Riverview has proposed that all initial capital costs be funded as part of the Project rather than from Trust funds. The required initial capital works and associated costs will be confirmed in a forthcoming report on the specific infrastructure and management needs of the corridor.

Ongoing resourcing and operation

Proposed funding streams to support ongoing Trust operations include:

- » An annual contribution from the ACT Government, equal to that already allocated to similar areas in the ACT;
- » A contribution of a percentage (e.g. 1%) of the sale price of NSW lots (potentially via a Voluntary Planning Agreement); and
- » Other funding opportunities such as income from recreation and tourism activities, grants, memberships, or other social enterprise.

Annual contribution from the ACT Government

It is proposed that the Trust receive an annual contribution from the ACT Government. The annual contribution from the ACT Government is proposed to be equal to the expected cost the ACT Government would have incurred had the ACT part of the corridor land been managed as part of the ACT public land estate.

An indication of the cost incurred by the ACT Government for managing reserved land is given in the *Gungahlin Strategic Assessment: Biodiversity Plan* recently published by the ACT Economic Development Directorate and the ACT Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate. In the *Gungahlin Strategic Assessment*, the ACT Government commits to contributing between \$652.17 to \$1,445.24 (2012-13 dollars) per hectare per annum depending on the identified conservation area.

Managing the West Belconnen corridor entails investment in a range of complex issues, such as:

- » Conserving habitat of the endangered Pink-tailed Worm Lizard and large tracts of endangered box-gum woodlands;
- » Bushfire management;
- » Enabling recreational and tourism use of the corridor by existing and new residents (given this area is the only access to the river on the north side of Canberra); and
- » Water quality control.

These unique and complex pressures, among others, suggest the cost would be equal to or above the most expensive conservation area identified in the *Gungahlin Strategic Assessment*. The Trust would thus seek a contribution of around \$1500/ha/year (2012-13 dollars) from the ACT Government, under the assumption this cost would have been incurred by the ACT Government if the land were to be surrendered back to public ownership and managed as part of the ACT conservation estate.

NSW lot sale contributions

A further contribution of a percentage (e.g. 1%) of the proceeds from the sale of each NSW lot would be made by NSW developers, potentially via a Voluntary Planning Agreement (legal advice would be sought as to the most appropriate mechanism). It is intended that the proceeds from lot sales are invested, with the Trust operating on the annual interest earned from the investment.

Current development parameters indicate a yield of 5000 lots in NSW. A lot sale price of \$220,000 (2013-14 dollars) per lot and a contribution of 1% per lot to the Trust from NSW developers would result in a total contribution of \$11,000,000 (2013-14 dollars) to the Trust from the NSW portion of the development. Should this base sum be invested and return 5% annual interest, the Trust would receive \$550,000 per year in interest for use to cover ongoing operational costs.

Other funding opportunities

The Trust would be able to receive other funds such as the income derived from all tourism and recreational related activities conducted within the corridor, as well as private donations or revenue from grant programs such as the Australian Government's Caring for Our Country scheme or National Landcare Programme. The Trust could charge access fees for use of certain facilities, and maintain a membership program where members pay an annual fee for unlimited access to such facilities (similar to annual passes to NSW national parks). It could also explore opportunities for diversifying revenue streams through involvement with other social enterprise within and outside the corridor.

Other social enterprise

The Company would be set up for the primary purpose of delivering the Trust. As the West Belconnen development proceeds and its residents integrate with surrounding communities, other social enterprises may become viable and may provide alternative revenue streams if managed by the Company.

Various opportunities may exist related to training/education, nurseries, recreation, urban agriculture, and the like. The board would seek legal advice as to the best means of including such social enterprises into its business (i.e. could they be incorporated into the existing Trust? A new trust? A separate arrangement altogether?). The opportunity for the Company to partake in other social enterprise within West Belconnen, however, would be advantageous to broaden community involvement. It would also allow for a degree of economic resilience by raising revenue from diverse sources.

Ensuring funding in perpetuity

A key opportunity in the design of this Company and associated Trust is to retain flexibility in the overall corporate structure to diversify revenue streams and therefore ultimately overcome the recurrent cost burden cited by many conservation land managers, enabling the development of this world-class conservation asset. The Trust would aim to build an endowment fund within which the seed capital is protected and administrative and routine land management operations are funded out of the interest earned and income gained from other business opportunities.

The proposed funding arrangement gives certainty that funding will be available in perpetuity to achieve the objectives of the Trust, while retaining flexibility for the Trust to diversify its funding streams and take advantage of opportunities that may arise.

The Trust would maintain an agreed amount as seed capital or cash bonds to be available to be delivered to a third party in the event of the Company or Trust winding up.

Next steps

Over the coming months and parallel with the West Belconnen rezoning process, the corridor will be the subject of further research. As mentioned several times throughout this paper, a more detailed analysis is forthcoming that will describe the management needs of the corridor and investigate the legal and operational context required for effective management of public access within the corridor by Trust personnel. It will also outline draft schedules of revenue and expenditure required for effective Trust operations.

Appendices

- A The West Belconnen Project Vision
- B Draft table of contents for the corridor management plan

A The West Belconnen Project Vision



The Belconnen Project Sustainability Vision

“Creating a sustainable community of international significance in the Nation’s capital.”

The Riverview Group, working with the ACT and NSW Governments, will develop the site at Belconnen to achieve a vision of inspiring sustainable living, development practice and awareness. Achieving a high quality of life for the people living at Belconnen is at the heart of our project planning and design.

We will create a community that exemplifies World’s Best Practice in its design, construction and long-term liveability. As a model of sustainable community living it will be a place and community that can be showcased throughout Australia and internationally.



Project objectives:

To achieve our Vision we will challenge conventional industry thinking. We will employ practices, processes and systems that embody innovation and design excellence.

This project has been conceived and will be delivered on a fully integrated and audited triple bottom line basis.

Our project will:

- » Be sustainable over time, socially, economically and ecologically (with a low and reducing ecological footprint)
- » Respond to the local and global environment
- » Provide for future beneficial change to occur in design, infrastructure and regulatory mechanisms
- » Be cost effective, replicable and measurable
- » Act as a new model that others can follow.

Guiding Principles for Sustainable Results

The principles below will direct decision-making by all project management, sub-consultants and referral agencies in the delivery and development of the Belconnen site. They reflect national priorities and Federal, State and Territory Government policies on housing affordability, climate change and environmental protection.

PARTNERING PRINCIPLES

- Ptnr 1. Partnering is essential to this project and the scale and timeframe will allow for positive partnerships to grow and thrive
- Ptnr 2. Partnering with public agencies is a cornerstone of our approach
- Ptnr 3. Engaging the community in design and governance is fundamental to the delivery of the project.
- Ptnr 4. Designing the project for community ownership and ultimate community control
- Ptnr 5. Supporting community housing through public and private partnering arrangements
- Ptnr 6. Collaborating with research and educational institutions to drive innovation.

EVALUATION PRINCIPLES

- Eva 1. Identifying and delivering realistic and costed initiatives
- Eva 2. Providing independent peer review of project proposals and project outcomes
- Eva 3. Using recognised international and national benchmarks for sustainability performance to publicly report and raise awareness of project outcomes
- Eva 4. Empowering resident and community monitoring and management of sustainability performance
- Eva 5. Encouraging a culture of continuous improvement.

ECOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES

- Eco 1. Acknowledging the intrinsic value of all species and the special role and regional significance of the Murrumbidgee river corridor and Gininnderra Creek
- Eco 2. Respecting and supporting the ecosystem functions of air, soil and water, recognising the importance of living and non-living environmental resources
- Eco 3. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions through innovative products and place design, material selection and service provision
- Eco 4. Recognising our natural ecological limits and minimising our resource, water and energy consumption
- Eco 5. Using existing local infrastructure to deliver efficient renewable services and reusable resources
- Eco 6. Enhancing local opportunities for food production and production of materials
- Eco 7. Fostering a deep sense of respect for and connection to the land, flora and fauna.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL PRINCIPLES

- Soc 1. Respecting and honouring Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural, historical and spiritual values, including integrating with the existing rich, social fabric of Belconnen
- Soc 2. Designing for social equity, affordability, diversity and interdependence, honouring differences and catering for the needs of individuals through all stages of life
- Soc 3. Maximising health, safety and comfort of the built environment to provide enduring quality of life
- Soc 4. Instilling awareness and supporting education of sustainability values, technology and lifestyles
- Soc 5. Using creative and robust design solutions to create a continuing sense of place and beauty that inspires, affirms and ennobles
- Soc 6. Designing neighbourhoods that support and encourage community interactions through imaginative, functional and enjoyable public spaces

ECONOMIC PRINCIPLES

- Econ 1. Delivering a financial return to the ACT Government recognising their sovereign interest in the land
- Econ 2. Recognising the opportunities provided by the project's scale and low capital base to achieve high-level sustainability outcomes while delivering profitability to joint venture partners
- Econ 3. Building on existing local infrastructure
- Econ 4. Ensuring long-term economic viability through design excellence and community building
- Econ 5. Minimising obsolescence through design of enduring component life cycle, allowing for disassembly and change
- Econ 6. Integrating with the Belconnen commercial, retail and employment networks
- Econ 7. Growing a formal and informal green economy that fosters local jobs and builds regional learning around green innovation and technology

B Draft table of contents for the corridor management plan

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 - b. Monitoring and Evaluation of Management Outcomes
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9. Implementation, Management Actions and Priorities

BELCONNEN WEST BLOCKS 1605 & 1606

Advice on Heritage Matters

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- C. SUMMARY OF NATURAL HERITAGE VALUES

1.0 SITE

The site includes Belconnen Blocks 1605 and 1606. (Refer Figure 1).

The area of block 1605, shown shaded in green on the plan below, closer to the Murrumbidgee River, is part of the National Capital Open Space System (NCOSS).

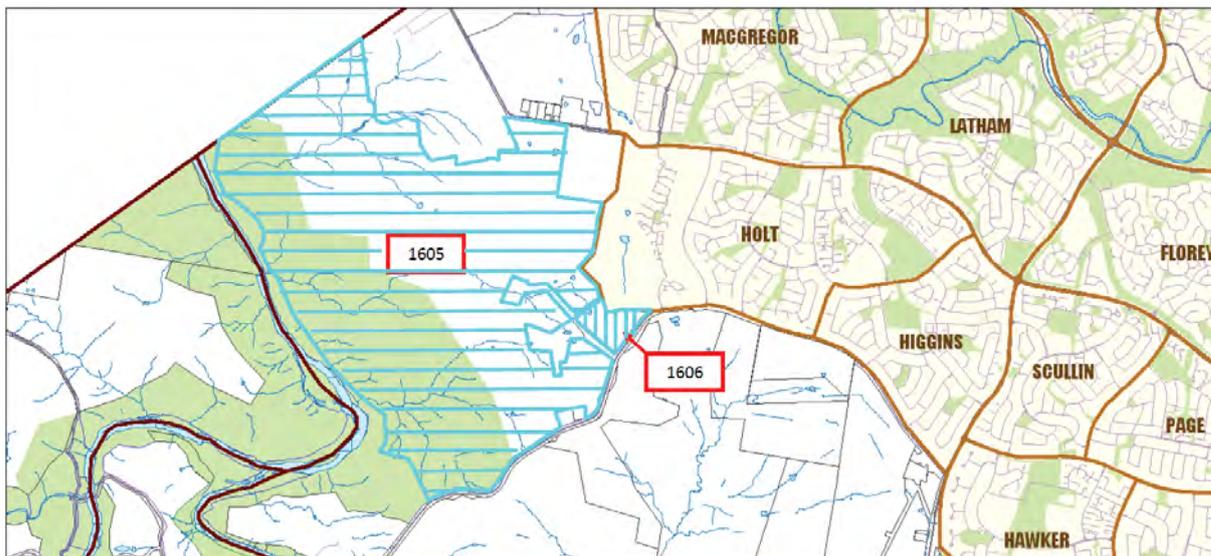


Figure 1
Source: ACTPLA

2.0 LEGISLATIVE CONTROL

2.1 NCA

The NCOSS aims to conserve natural and cultural values of the area. Planning and management of this area is to be in the interests of both NCA and ACTPLA.

The main aim of the river corridor is to reinforce and preserve the landscape and heritage values of the area and protect them from urban encroachment.

The NCA have no planning control on the balance of the site except that the Territory Plan provisions for the area must be consistent with the National Capital Plan.

2.2 ACT GOVERNMENT

This applies to blocks 1605 and 1606. The Heritage interest is controlled through the ACT Heritage Act 2004. Places need to be nominated, assessed and included on the ACT Heritage Register for full protection.

2.3 HERITAGE

2.3.1 ACT Heritage Advice

Advice offered by ACT Heritage to Riverview in discussions about the proposal with ACTPLA is:

Pursuant to s.148 (1) of the *Planning and Development Act 2007* and S.60 of the *Heritage Act 2004*, the ACT Heritage Council advises that:

There are no perceived heritage issues with this application and a DETAILED ASSESSMENT IS NOT REQUIRED.

Notes: This application is a re-submission of an application for lease variation that was previously refused by ACTPLA. The original heritage advice stated that,

"The Heritage Council does not identify any issues with the lease variation per se but notes that Blocks 1605 & 1606 are both listed in the ACT Register under the Aboriginal Places in Belconnen. Any future development proposals for these blocks will require assessment against the ACT Heritage Legislation."

The Heritage Council maintains this previous advice. The developer did not provide a Cultural Heritage Report with his application, but nor was one required.

The Heritage Council does not oppose the proposed lease variation. However, any development on this land proposed in the future will be assessed against the ACT Heritage Legislation. At this time a Cultural Heritage Assessment and Conservation Management Plan will be required.

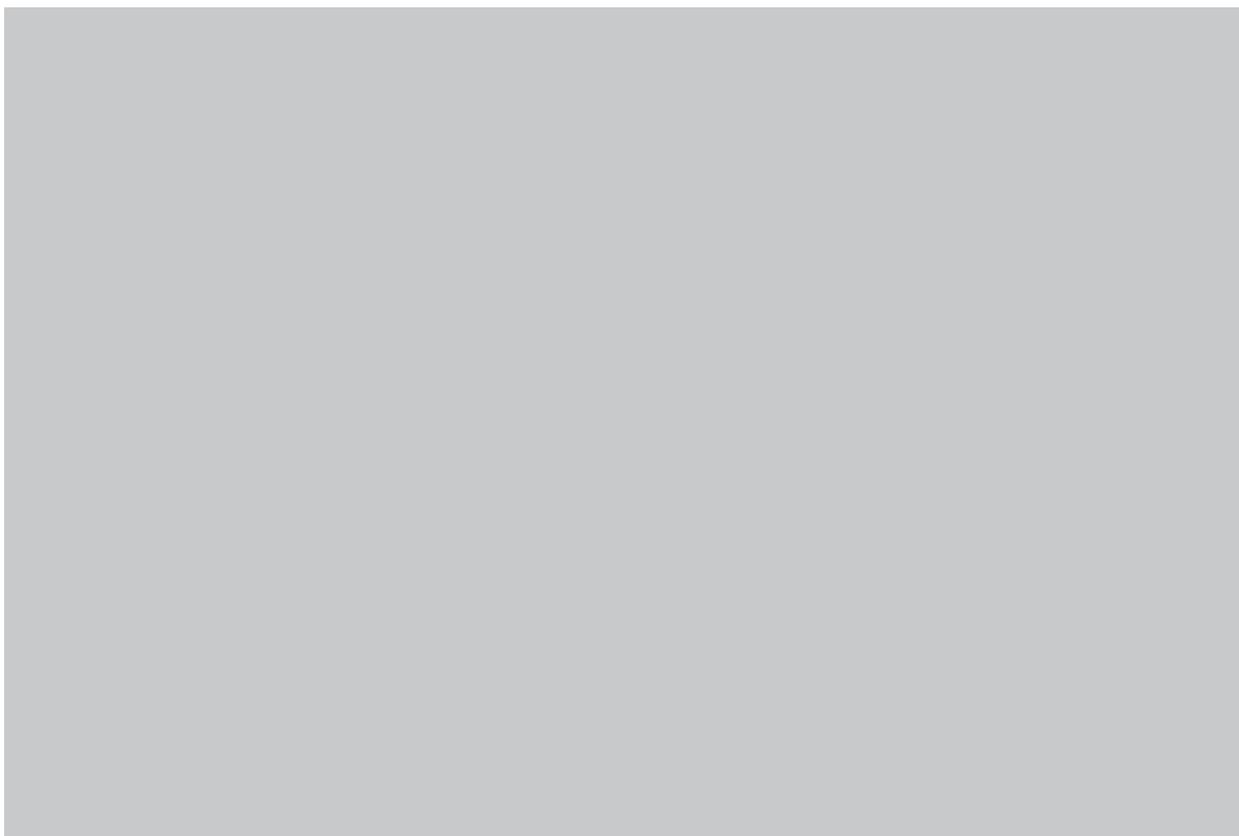
Blocks 1563 and 1518 are listed in a notifiable instrument (NI 2003-430), these blocks no longer exist but they cover the majority of the area now identified as Blocks 1605 and 1606. It appears that currently identified archaeological sites occur on Block 1605, although none are known for Block 1606.

2.3.2 Indigenous Heritage

This includes all aspects related to aboriginal interest in the area.

No heritage interest in Block 1606.

There are a number of identified archaeological artefact sites in Block 1605 which are low to medium significance.



LOCATION OF ARTEFACT SCATTERS – WEST BELCONNEN – BLOCKS 1605 AND 1606

Figure 2

Source: ACT Heritage

Three of the sites are covered by ACT Heritage Citation (20140 Medium, 20124 low and 20132 low) which defines specific requirements that apply to each of these areas. (Refer Attachment A (Citation) for details.)

References

Faulkner, P. 2004. An archaeological survey and cultural heritage impact statement, Mount Stromlo, ACT. Unpublished report for ANUgreen.

McKay, S. 2003 and 2004. Site Recording Forms lodged with the Heritage Unit of Environment ACT.

Navin Officer. 2004. ACTEW Mini-Hydro Scheme, Lower Molonglo Water Quality Control Centre, ACT: Cultural heritage assessment. Unpublished report to CEE Consultants Pty. Ltd.

Navin Officer. 2003a. Casey Concept Plan: cultural heritage assessment overview. Unpublished report to Purdon Associates.

Navin Officer. 2003b. Ngunnawal 2C Residential Estate: survey for archaeological sites. Unpublished report to WP Brown & Partners Pty. Ltd.

Saunders, P. 2004a. Gooroo Nature Reserve, ACT: Aboriginal archaeological survey of fire trails and creek crossings. Unpublished report to ACT Parks and Conservation Service.

Saunders, P. 2004b. Feasibility study for a multi-purpose cycling and wheeled-sports facility in the ACT: Cultural heritage assessment of Diddams Close Park, Belconnen and Block 8 Section 28, Bruce. Unpublished report for Young Consulting Engineers Pty. Ltd.

Saunders, P. 2004c. Birrigai School Site cultural heritage assessment. Unpublished report to ACT Procurement Solutions.

Actions

A further more detailed archaeological survey should precede any planning development but after the acceptance in principle of the planning concept.

A Conservation & Management Plan will be required for any sites on/or proposed for ACT Heritage Register.

2.3.3 Natural Heritage

This includes all aspects of flora and fauna.

The areas of interest for endangered flora and fauna area adequately identified and controlled through natural environmental legislation. There are considered to be no areas required to be protected by Heritage registration. (Refer separate advice summary in Attachment C)

2.3.4 Cultural Heritage

Existing Built Places (this includes Buildings and associated landscape)

Within the 1605 and 1606 Sites there are

- Belconnen Farm
- A network of fences and tracks

Past Built Places

- None known

Adjacent Places

Strathnairn an older (C1900) homestead complex (homestead, sheds, shearing shed, shearer's quarters, chef's quarters and outhouse) now developed as an arts precinct under Arts ACT and includes a gallery, artist studios, artist in residence flat, caretakers flat within a landscape setting. (trees, shrubs, paths, grassed areas, dam).

No current heritage listing or consideration (unlikely to meet threshold for listing) but a viable ongoing concern which will remain. Currently enjoys views west to the Murrumbidgee which is a strong attraction of the place.

Heritage Status

Belconnen Farm is undergoing assessment by the ACT Heritage Council and it is likely that part (probably earliest sections and Oliphant House) will be heritage listed. (Refer Attachment B for plan and history notes.)

Probably considered by ACT Heritage Council in 2011.

Action

Wait for ACT Heritage Council advice.

ATTACHMENT A

Act Heritage Council Citation 20140



ACT Heritage Council

Entry to the ACT Heritage Register

*Heritage Act 2004***20140. Aboriginal Places – Districts of Belconnen, Coree, Cotter River, Gungahlin, Paddys River & Stromlo**

Section 28, Block 8

Bruce

Blocks 1518, 1553

District of BELCONNEN

Blocks 35, 40

District of COREE

Block 11

District of COTTER RIVER

Blocks 362, 558, 621, 622, 712 and Ngunnawal 2C

District of GUNGAHLIN

Block 10

District of PADDYS RIVER

Blocks 38 and 452

District of STROMLO

This document has been prepared by the ACT Heritage Council.

This entry which was previously part of the old heritage places or the old heritage objects registers (as defined in the **Heritage Act 2004**), as the case may be, is taken to be registered under the **Heritage Act 2004**.

Conservation Requirements (including Specific Requirements), as defined under the **Heritage Act 2004**, that are contained within this document are taken to be Heritage Guidelines applying to this place or object, as the case may be.

Information restricted under *the old heritage places register or old heritage objects register* is restricted under the **Heritage Act 2004**.

Contact: ACT Heritage Council c/o Secretary PO Box 144
Enquiries: phone 02 6207 2164 fax 02 6207 5715

Lynham ACT 2602
 e-mail heritage@act.gov.au



ACT Government

environment ACT 

Helpline: 02 6207 9777
 Website : www.cmd.act.gov.au
 E-mail: EnvironmentACT@act.gov.au



ACT Heritage Council

**AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY
INTERIM HERITAGE PLACES REGISTER**

For the purposes of s. 68(2) of the *Land (Planning and Environment) Act* 1991, a listing for the following places has been prepared by the ACT Heritage Council, for the purpose of including:

Aboriginal Places in Districts of Belconnen, Coree, Cotter River, Gungahlin, Paddy's River & Stromlo, ACT (52) comprising:

- **Aboriginal Places in District of Belconnen (6)**
- **Aboriginal Places in District of Coree (2)**
- **Aboriginal Places in District of Cotter River (1)**
- **Aboriginal Places in District of Gungahlin (38)**
- **Aboriginal Places in District of Paddys River (2)**
- **Aboriginal Places in District of Stromlo (3)**

In an interim Heritage Places Register.

Copies of the listing are available for inspection at ACT Public Libraries and at all ACT Government Shopfronts. For further information please contact:

The Secretary
ACT Heritage Council
GPO Box 144, Canberra, ACT 2601

Telephone: (02) 6207 7378 Facsimile: (02) 6207 2200

**Notifiable Instrument: NI 2004 - 322
Effective: 3 September 2004**

IDENTIFICATION OF THE PLACES

The places comprise 52 Aboriginal sites located within:

- Block 1518, District of Belconnen (n=1)
- Block 1553, District of Belconnen (n=3)
- Block 8, Section 28, in the suburb of Bruce (n=2)
- Block 35, District of Coree (n=1)
- Block 40, District of Coree (n=1)
- Block 11, District of Cotter River (n=1)
- Block 362, District of Gungahlin (n=3)
- Block 558, District of Gungahlin (n=3)
- Block 621, District of Gungahlin (n=14)
- Block 622, District of Gungahlin (n=8)
- Block 662, District of Gungahlin (n=4)
- Block 712, District of Gungahlin (n=2)
- Ngunnawal 2C, District of Gungahlin (n=4)
- Block 10, District of Paddys River (n=2)
- Block 38, District of Stromlo (n=2)
- Block 452, District of Stromlo (n=1)

The Canberra 1:10 000 scale Adjusted Grid Co-ordinate (CMG) locations for the places are held within a database of ACT site locations. The CMG grid co-ordinates are restricted information under s.82 of the *Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991*.

FEATURES INTRINSIC TO THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PLACES

The places comprise locations where Aboriginal stone artefacts have been recorded (n=52), and their individually specified site buffer zones (as described in Schedule 2). The sites are scatters of stone artefacts including one stone procurement site (n=9), isolated stone artefacts (n=18) and potential archaeological deposits (n=25).

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The ACT Aboriginal community considers all archaeological evidence of the past occupation of the ACT by Aboriginal people to be significant. Aboriginal places have the capacity to demonstrate and provide information about ways in which Aboriginal people lived in the past. These places are part of a regional body of evidence that has potential to reveal information about patterns of past Aboriginal land-use and settlement. Details of the site locations and descriptive information about them builds upon and complements the considerable body of archaeological research that exists for the Canberra region.

These places are all part of the physical evidence of a traditional way of life that is no longer practised within the ACT. Stone was an extremely important element of Aboriginal culture, essential to their day-to-day living. The presence of artefact scatters in these localities demonstrates past occupation and use of these places by Aboriginal people whereas an isolated stone artefact is a more tenuous indication of Aboriginal use of a place. Stone artefacts thus constitute an enduring record of Aboriginal technology and settlement patterns. The individual artefacts at the sites also have significance due to their potential to contribute to research about Aboriginal stone technology.

Areas of identified archaeological potential are considered to be significant cultural resources because of their potential to contain buried evidence of past Aboriginal occupation, likely to be intact and in better condition than other surface exposed sites.

CONSERVATION POLICY AND SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

The Heritage Council promotes a *general conservation policy* for all Aboriginal heritage sites. This policy states that Aboriginal sites are to be conserved appropriately in accordance with their individual heritage significance, taking into account their Aboriginal and archaeological heritage values. Aboriginal sites and their components form an integral part of the landscape. The spatial relationships between sites, as well as their geographic relationship to land, constitute significant information with potential to inform about past cultural practices. The maintenance of records about sites and their geographic location is essential for the conservation of this information. Areas that have potential to contain Aboriginal heritage sites, including areas in which archaeological survey has not yet been undertaken, are to be managed in a way that permits the identification, significance assessment and conservation, where appropriate, of the Aboriginal cultural heritage resource.

In addition to the general conservation policy, the Heritage Council has developed a series of *specific requirements* to provide direction for conservation of the heritage significance of Aboriginal heritage sites. The specific requirements have been prepared to implement conservation policies and objectives developed for the places.

The specific requirements for conservation of Aboriginal heritage places are set out in Schedule 1. This is preceded by general information about the different types of Aboriginal heritage places that can occur and their conservation objectives.

Artefact Scatters

Artefact scatters constitute identifiably dense occurrences of stone artefacts and represent geographic foci of Aboriginal occupation related to a range of activities. Scatters may form as a result of single intensive occupation events or build up over hundreds or thousands of years due to repeated use or occupation of an area. The current appearance and structure of an artefact scatter site will depend upon the impact of events, termed *formation processes*, that have affected the artefacts during and after their deposition. Formation processes include both natural and cultural factors such as soil erosion and deposition, other natural disturbances, reuse of places by Aboriginal people and later European land-use practices. The heritage values of artefact scatters are based upon their Aboriginal and archaeological significance.

All artefact scatters are considered to be significant by the Aboriginal community. Aboriginal people generally express the desire for all such sites to be left *in situ* wherever feasible. Their significance to Aboriginal people is primarily based on their provision of evidence of the occupation of land by their ancestors. Artefact scatters thus comprise a demonstrable link to place for contemporary Aboriginal people.

The archaeological significance of artefact scatters stems both from their physical representation of past cultural practices and for their potential to yield information through research that will increase our understanding of the past. The potential research value accorded to sites depends in turn on a range of factors including the individual quality and quantity of artefactual content, the condition and integrity of the site structure, whether the artefacts occur *in situ* within cultural deposit, and whether original relationships between artefacts are likely to be discernible and meaningful.

The significance of artefact scatters may be thus ranked from low to high according to their value to Aboriginal people, their archaeological value and their condition and integrity. **Their significance to Aboriginal people may not necessarily, however, relate to or accord with archaeological significance assessments.** The criteria for ranking artefact scatters into either low, medium or high categories of significance and their associated conservation objectives are detailed as follows:

- **Artefact scatters of Low Conservation Value**

Artefact scatters identified as having low conservation value are those sites with very few artefacts, with artefacts of a common type, with no associated cultural deposit and/or sites that have already been highly disturbed and where there is negligible potential for them to provide further information. Such sites may either be conserved *in situ* or be the subject of a program of archaeological investigation and salvage as recommended by the Heritage Council, after consultation with the relevant Aboriginal organisations.

Generally, the conservation objective for this site type is to record and retain where feasible, otherwise salvage.

- **Artefact scatters of Medium Conservation Value**

Artefact scatters identified as having medium conservation value include sites with high artefact numbers and/or density and/or with identified or potential associated deposit. They are also sites of common type and character. Sites of medium conservation value may either be conserved *in situ* or be the subject of a program of archaeological investigation and salvage. The investigation and salvage may include collection of artefacts, subsurface testing, excavation or other investigative techniques as recommended by the Heritage Council, after consultation with the relevant Aboriginal organisations.

Generally, the conservation objective for this site type is to record and retain where feasible, investigate further and/or salvage.

- **Artefact scatters of High Conservation Value**

Artefact scatters identified as having high conservation value include sites with high artefact numbers and/or density, with rare, or representative artefacts, and/or with identified or potential associated deposit. They may also be sites of good preservation and condition where the original site structure and contents have survived. Sites of high conservation value are to be conserved *in situ* in an appropriate setting, where feasible. However site investigations for the purposes of improving their conservation or research may be permitted, provided that the relevant Aboriginal organisations have been consulted about any proposed works and agree to their occurrence.

The identification of appropriate conservation actions may require preparation of a Conservation and Management Plan. Actions that propose impact upon their identified heritage values will be considered on a case by case basis by the Heritage Council in consultation with the relevant Aboriginal organisations, and with reference to the applicable Conservation and Management Plan or Research Plan, if prepared.

Generally, the conservation objective for this site type is to record, retain and actively conserve.

Potential Archaeological Deposits

Areas of potential Aboriginal Heritage sensitivity or potential archaeological deposits (PADs) are generally areas defined in the course of professional field or predictive archaeological assessment. They include areas where sites or artefacts are identified as likely to occur, but where ground visibility precludes site or artefact detection or where field survey has not been undertaken. Knowledge of regional and/or local patterns of site occurrence and site formation processes is generally prerequisite for the identification of areas of archaeological potential. Further investigation of areas of archaeological potential may be required prior to or during development. Such further investigation may include sub-surface testing, monitoring or excavation. The significance of such areas will ultimately depend on the outcome of the further investigations.

Generally, the conservation objective of this site type is to investigate, assess, record and retain if deemed appropriate.

Quarries/Stone Sources

An Aboriginal quarry is a site where Aboriginal people extracted raw materials for making stone artefacts, and may also include ochre quarries. There may be evidence of extraction in the form of artificial cleavage from outcrops, excavated holes and/or stone artefacts. Large river cobbles can be broken into more manageable sized pieces near their source or good quality pebbles can be curated for later use, often well away from their source. The rock types most suited to stone artefact manufacture include, but are not limited to, silcretes, chert and fine grained volcanics. These sites were essential to Aboriginal people and as such have a high conservation value. Sites of high conservation value are to be conserved *in situ* in an appropriate setting, where feasible. However site investigations for the purposes of improving their conservation or research may be permitted, provided that the relevant Aboriginal organisations have been consulted about any proposed works and agree to their occurrence.

The identification of appropriate conservation actions may require preparation of a Conservation and Management Plan. Actions that propose impact upon their identified heritage values will be considered on a case by case basis by the Heritage Council in consultation with the relevant Aboriginal organisations, and with reference to the applicable Conservation and Management Plan or Research Plan, if prepared.

Generally, the conservation objective for this type of site is to record, retain and actively conserve.

Schedule 1: Specific Requirements for the Conservation of Aboriginal Heritage Places

- 1 Information regarding the description and specific location of the place shall be held in a database of ACT Aboriginal heritage sites.
- 2 Actions that would affect the conservation of the heritage significance of the place require the agreement of the Heritage Council in consultation with the relevant Aboriginal organisations.
- 3 Works that improve or benefit the conservation of the heritage significance of the place are permitted. Proponents of such works shall advise the Heritage Council and consult with the relevant Aboriginal organisations about the proposal. The agreement of the Heritage Council must be obtained prior to works being undertaken.
- 4a Development proponents shall be aware that the presence of an Aboriginal heritage site(s) within a development area may impose constraint upon the development. The nature of the constraint will vary according to the assessed significance of the site(s) and the potential heritage impact of the development. For *artefact scatters* assessed as being of *low conservation value* (LCV) the development constraint may range from nil constraint to a requirement to undertake further survey or investigation of a place, further recording of a place and/or collection of artefacts or other cultural materials.
- 4b Development proponents shall be aware that the presence of an Aboriginal heritage site(s) within a development area may impose constraint upon the development. The nature of the constraint will vary according to the assessed significance of the site(s) and the potential heritage impact of the development. For *artefact scatters* assessed as being of *medium conservation value* (MCV) the development constraint may range from nil constraint to a requirement to undertake further survey or investigation of all or part of the place, further recording of a place and/or collection of artefacts or other cultural materials, subsurface testing, monitoring during development or salvage excavation, or a requirement to conserve a representative part of the site whilst carrying out further works on the remainder.
- 4c Development proponents shall be aware that the presence of an Aboriginal heritage site(s) within a development area may impose constraint upon the development. The nature of the constraint will vary according to the assessed significance of the site(s) and the potential heritage impact of the development. For *artefact scatters, Aboriginal stone arrangements or rockshelters* assessed as being of *high conservation value* (HCV) the development constraint may range from nil constraint to a requirement to undertake investigation of a place, prepare and/or implement a Conservation and Management Plan for the place, to an inability to undertake part or all of the development within the affected area(s).
- 4d Areas of potential archaeological deposits shall be further investigated to assess their Aboriginal and archaeological significance prior to their development. Development proponents shall be aware that the presence of a PAD within a development area may impose constraint upon the development. For these areas the development constraint will occur in two stages. Initially the constraint may range from nil constraint to a requirement to undertake further investigative work such as additional field survey and/or subsurface testing. Any subsequent constraint will vary according to the assessed significance of any Aboriginal cultural heritage materials located within the area and the potential heritage impact of the development.
- 5 The ACT Heritage Council shall advise the proponent of the degree of constraint, based upon the nature of the development and its potential heritage impact and the significance assessment of the site(s), and in consultation with the relevant Aboriginal organisations.
- 6a Artefacts (including scarred trees) and/or any other identified significant fabric or components of the site shall not be removed, damaged, altered or disturbed without the prior agreement of the Heritage Council, and consultation with the relevant Aboriginal organisations.
- 6b Should further investigation determine that Aboriginal archaeological materials are present in a PAD then records about the place shall be updated, and the Heritage Council shall be consulted about the appropriate management of the place. In providing such advice the Heritage Council shall consult with the relevant Aboriginal organisations.

-
- 7** Any further investigation of sites and/or collection of artefacts and/or salvage of site fabric or other cultural materials agreed to by the Heritage Council shall be undertaken by a qualified archaeologist in consultation with the relevant Aboriginal organisations, in accordance with a proposed methodology provided to and endorsed by the Heritage Council.
 - 8** Salvaged or collected materials shall be archived by the Heritage Unit, pending establishment of an appropriate storage facility.
 - 9** If the Heritage Council advises collection or salvage then, following completion of salvage works as advised by the Heritage Council only Specific Requirement No. 1 shall apply to the identified place.
 - 10** The place may not be promoted for public use, interpretation or visitation without approval from the Heritage Council in consultation with the relevant Aboriginal groups. Any proposed educational and presentational uses of the place shall be considered by the ACT Heritage Council and relevant Aboriginal organisations on the basis of whether sufficient information is provided about their impacts and potential impacts upon the place.
 - 11** Any proposed research that may potentially impact upon the heritage significance of the place shall be conducted in accordance with a research proposal which provides for consultation with the relevant Aboriginal organisations and which is endorsed by the Heritage Council.
 - 12** Prior to the approval of any proposed development that may potentially impact upon the heritage significance of the place the proponent shall prepare a Conservation and Management Plan for the place. The plan must be provided to the Heritage Council for endorsement. Prior to giving such endorsement the Heritage Council will consult the relevant Aboriginal groups about the management of the site. Any subsequent development of the place shall then be undertaken in accordance with the endorsed plan, unless the Heritage Council advises the proponent otherwise.
-

Schedule 2 : List of Aboriginal heritage places

| GENERAL SITE DESCRIPTION | LOCATION | SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS (refer Schedule 1) |
|---|---|---|
| <p>BS1</p> <p>A low density scatter of at least eight stone artefacts located on a river terrace, with good potential for additional artefacts to be present in the surrounding area.</p> <p>Recorded – McKay 2003</p> | <p>Block 1518 District of Belconnen</p> | <p>Artefact scatter of MCV:</p> <p>1 2 3 4b 5 6a 7 8 9 10 11</p> |
| <p>MHIF1</p> <p>An isolated stone artefact located downslope from the Lower Molonglo Water Quality Control Centre boundary fence.</p> <p>Recorded – Navin Officer 2004</p> | <p>Block 1553 District of Belconnen</p> | <p>Artefact scatter of LCV:</p> <p>1 2 3 4a 5 6a 7 8 9</p> |
| <p>MH1</p> <p>A low density scatter of at least four stone artefacts located on a spur, with good potential for site to be larger than recorded.</p> <p>Recorded – Navin Officer 2004</p> | <p>Block 1553 District of Belconnen</p> | <p>Artefact scatter of LCV:</p> <p>1 2 3 4a 5 6a 7 8 9</p> |
| <p>MH PAD</p> <p>A potential archaeological deposit located in close proximity to MH1.</p> <p>Recorded – Navin Officer 2004</p> | <p>Block 1553 District of Belconnen</p> | <p>PAD:</p> <p>1 2 3 4d 5 6a 6b 7 8 9</p> |

Schedule 2 : List of Aboriginal heritage places

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| <p>SPA</p> <p>An isolated stone artefact located on a flat next to a creek crossing.</p> <p>Recorded – McKay 2003</p> | <p>Block 40 District of Coree</p> | <p>Artefact scatter of LCV:</p> <p>1 2 3 4a 5 6a 7 8 9</p> |
| <p>BRC1</p> <p>A low density scatter of at least two stone artefacts located on a creek margin flat.</p> <p>Recorded – McKay 2003</p> | <p>Block 35 District of Coree</p> | <p>Artefact scatter of LCV:</p> <p>1 2 3 4a 5 6a 7 8 9</p> |
| <p>BF1</p> <p>A medium density scatter of at least fifty six stone artefacts located on a river terrace, with good potential for site to be larger than recorded.</p> <p>Recorded – McKay 2003</p> | <p>Block 11 District of Cotter River</p> | <p>Artefact scatter of MCV:</p> <p>1 2 3 4b 5 6a 7 8 9 10 11</p> |
| <p>N2C1</p> <p>An isolated stone artefact located on a vehicle track on a hilltop.</p> <p>Recorded – Navin Officer 2003b</p> | <p>Ngunnawal 2C in the District of Gungahlin</p> | <p>Artefact scatter of LCV:</p> <p>1 2 3 4a 5 6a 7 8 9</p> |

Schedule 2 : List of Aboriginal heritage places

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| <p>N2C2</p> <p>An isolated stone artefact located on the surface of a graded fire containment line.</p> <p>Recorded – Navin Officer 2003b</p> | <p>Ngunnawal 2C in the District of Gungahlin</p> | <p>Artefact scatter of LCV:</p> <p>1 2 3 4a 5 6a 7 8 9</p> |
| <p>N2C3</p> <p>An isolated stone artefact located on a graded surface next to a dirt vehicle track on a ridge top.</p> <p>Recorded – Navin Officer 2003b</p> | <p>Ngunnawal 2C in the District of Gungahlin</p> | <p>Artefact scatter of LCV:</p> <p>1 2 3 4a 5 6a 7 8 9</p> |
| <p>N2C PAD1</p> <p>A potential archaeological deposit on a slightly elevated crest overlooking a creek.</p> <p>Recorded – Navin Officer 2003b</p> | <p>Block 621 District of Gungahlin</p> | <p>PAD:</p> <p>1 2 3 4d 5 6a 6b 7 8 9</p> |

Schedule 2 : List of Aboriginal heritage places

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| <p>N2C PAD2</p> <p>A potential archaeological deposit located on a low knoll to the east of a crest.</p> <p>Recorded – Navin Officer 2003b</p> | <p>Ngunnawal 2C in the District of Gungahlin</p> | <p>PAD:</p> <p>1 2 3 4d 5 6a 6b 7 8 9</p> |
| <p>Casey A1</p> <p>An isolated stone artefact located on a gently sloping spur crest.</p> <p>Recorded – Navin officer 2003a</p> | <p>Block 362 District of Gungahlin</p> | <p>Artefact scatter of LCV:</p> <p>1 2 3 4a 5 6a 7 8 9</p> |
| <p>Casey A2</p> <p>An isolated stone artefact located on the upper reaches of a spur in eroding drainage line.</p> <p>Recorded – Navin Officer 2003a</p> | <p>Block 362 District of Gungahlin</p> | <p>Artefact scatter of LCV:</p> <p>1 2 3 4a 5 6a 7 8 9</p> |
| <p>Casey A3</p> <p>An isolated stone artefact located on a spur crest in a valley floor.</p> <p>Recorded – Navin Officer 2003a</p> | <p>Block 621 District of Gungahlin</p> | <p>Artefact scatter of LCV:</p> <p>1 2 3 4a 5 6a 7 8 9</p> |

Schedule 2 : List of Aboriginal heritage places

| | | |
|---|---------------------------------|--|
| <p>Casey A4</p> <p>An isolated stone artefact located on a gently sloping spur side.</p> <p>Recorded – Navin Officer 2003a</p> | Block 621 District of Gungahlin | <p>Artefact scatter of LCV:</p> 1 2 3 4a 5 6a 7 8 9 |
| <p>Casey A5</p> <p>An isolated stone artefact located on a gentle to moderate mid slope of spurline.</p> <p>Recorded – Navin Officer 2003a</p> | Block 621 District of Gungahlin | <p>Artefact scatter of LCV:</p> 1 2 3 4a 5 6a 7 8 9 |
| <p>Casey A6</p> <p>A low density scatter of at least six artefacts located on the toe of a spur above a drainage line.</p> <p>Recorded – Navin Officer 2003a</p> | Block 621 District of Gungahlin | <p>Artefact scatter of LCV:</p> 1 2 3 4a 5 6a 7 8 9 |
| <p>Casey PAD 01</p> <p>An area of potential archaeological deposit.</p> <p>Recorded – Navin Officer 2003a</p> | Block 621 District of Gungahlin | <p>PAD:</p> 1 2 3 4d 5 6a 6b 7 8 9 |

Schedule 2 : List of Aboriginal heritage places

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Casey PAD 02</p> <p>An area of potential archaeological deposit.</p> <p>Recorded – Navin Officer 2003a</p> | <p>Block 621 District of Gungahlin</p> | <p>PAD:</p> <p>1 2 3 4d 5 6a 6b 7 8 9</p> |
| <p>Casey PAD 03</p> <p>An area of potential archaeological deposit.</p> <p>Recorded – Navin Officer 2003a</p> | <p>Block 621 District of Gungahlin</p> | <p>PAD:</p> <p>1 2 3 4d 5 6a 6b 7 8 9</p> |
| <p>Casey PAD 04</p> <p>An area of potential archaeological deposit.</p> <p>Recorded – Navin Officer 2003a</p> | <p>Block 621 District of Gungahlin</p> | <p>PAD:</p> <p>1 2 3 4d 5 6a 6b 7 8 9</p> |
| <p>Casey PAD 05</p> <p>An area of potential archaeological deposit.</p> <p>Recorded – Navin Officer 2003a</p> | <p>Block 621 District of Gungahlin</p> | <p>PAD:</p> <p>1 2 3 4d 5 6a 6b 7 8 9</p> |

Schedule 2 : List of Aboriginal heritage places

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| <p>Casey PAD 06</p> <p>An area of potential archaeological deposit.</p> <p>Recorded – Navin Officer 2003a</p> | <p>Block 621 District of Gungahlin</p> | <p>PAD:</p> <p>1 2 3 4d 5 6a 6b 7 8 9</p> |
| <p>Casey PAD 07</p> <p>An area of potential archaeological deposit.</p> <p>Recorded – Navin Officer 2003a</p> | <p>Block 622 District of Gungahlin</p> | <p>PAD:</p> <p>1 2 3 4d 5 6a 6b 7 8 9</p> |
| <p>Casey PAD 08</p> <p>An area of potential archaeological deposit.</p> <p>Recorded – Navin Officer 2003a</p> | <p>Block 622 District of Gungahlin</p> | <p>PAD:</p> <p>1 2 3 4d 5 6a 6b 7 8 9</p> |
| <p>Casey PAD 09</p> <p>An area of potential archaeological deposit.</p> <p>Recorded – Navin Officer 2003a</p> | <p>Block 362 District of Gungahlin</p> | <p>PAD:</p> <p>1 2 3 4d 5 6a 6b 7 8 9</p> |

Schedule 2 : List of Aboriginal heritage places

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| <p>Casey PAD 10</p> <p>An area of potential archaeological deposit.</p> <p>Recorded – Navin Officer 2003a</p> | <p>Block 558 District of Gungahlin</p> | <p>PAD:</p> <p>1 2 3 4d 5 6a 6b 7 8 9</p> |
| <p>Casey PAD 11</p> <p>An area of potential archaeological deposit.</p> <p>Recorded – Navin Officer 2003a</p> | <p>Block 622 District of Gungahlin</p> | <p>PAD:</p> <p>1 2 3 4d 5 6a 6b 7 8 9</p> |
| <p>Casey PAD 12</p> <p>An area of potential archaeological deposit.</p> <p>Recorded – Navin Officer 2003a</p> | <p>Block 622 District of Gungahlin</p> | <p>PAD:</p> <p>1 2 3 4d 5 6a 6b 7 8 9</p> |
| <p>Casey PAD 13</p> <p>An area of potential archaeological deposit.</p> <p>Recorded – Navin Officer 2003a</p> | <p>Block 622 District of Gungahlin</p> | <p>PAD:</p> <p>1 2 3 4d 5 6a 6b 7 8 9</p> |

Schedule 2 : List of Aboriginal heritage places

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| <p>Casey PAD 14</p> <p>An area of potential archaeological deposit.</p> <p>Recorded – Navin Officer 2003a</p> | <p>Block 622 District of Gungahlin</p> | <p>PAD:</p> <p>1 2 3 4d 5 6a 6b 7 8 9</p> |
| <p>Casey PAD 15</p> <p>An area of potential archaeological deposit.</p> <p>Recorded – Navin Officer 2003a</p> | <p>Block 622 District of Gungahlin</p> | <p>PAD:</p> <p>1 2 3 4d 5 6a 6b 7 8 9</p> |
| <p>Casey PAD 16</p> <p>An area of potential archaeological deposit.</p> <p>Recorded – Navin Officer 2003a</p> | <p>Block 622 District of Gungahlin</p> | <p>PAD:</p> <p>1 2 3 4d 5 6a 6b 7 8 9</p> |
| <p>Casey PAD 17</p> <p>An area of potential archaeological deposit.</p> <p>Recorded – Navin Officer 2003a</p> | <p>Block 558 District of Gungahlin</p> | <p>PAD:</p> <p>1 2 3 4d 5 6a 6b 7 8 9</p> |

Schedule 2 : List of Aboriginal heritage places

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| <p>Casey PAD 18</p> <p>An area of potential archaeological deposit.</p> <p>Recorded – Navin Officer 2003a</p> | <p>Block 621 District of Gungahlin</p> | <p>PAD:</p> <p>1 2 3 4d 5 6a 6b 7 8 9</p> |
| <p>Casey PAD 19</p> <p>An area of potential archaeological deposit.</p> <p>Recorded – Navin Officer 2003a</p> | <p>Block 621 District of Gungahlin</p> | <p>PAD:</p> <p>1 2 3 4d 5 6a 6b 7 8 9</p> |
| <p>Casey PAD 20</p> <p>An area of potential archaeological deposit.</p> <p>Recorded – Navin Officer 2003a</p> | <p>Block 621 District of Gungahlin</p> | <p>PAD:</p> <p>1 2 3 4d 5 6a 6b 7 8 9</p> |
| <p>Casey PAD 21</p> <p>An area of potential archaeological deposit.</p> <p>Recorded – Navin Officer 2003a</p> | <p>Block 558 District of Gungahlin</p> | <p>PAD:</p> <p>1 2 3 4d 5 6a 6b 7 8 9</p> |

Schedule 2 : List of Aboriginal heritage places

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| <p>GNRAS1</p> <p>A scatter of at least eleven stone artefacts located on a stock trail on a spur, with good potential for site to be larger than originally recorded.</p> <p>Recorded – Saunders 2004a</p> | Block 662 District of Gungahlin | <p>Artefact scatter of MCV:</p> 1 2 3 4b 5 6a 7 8 9 10 11 |
| <p>GNRAS2</p> <p>A low density scatter of at least two stone artefacts located on an unformed track 30m south of a drainage line.</p> <p>Recorded – Saunders 2004a</p> | Block 712 District of Gungahlin | <p>Artefact scatter of LCV:</p> 1 2 3 4a 5 6a 7 8 9 |
| <p>GNRIF1</p> <p>An isolated stone artefact located on low-moderate gradient upper slopes, with some potential for additional artefacts to be present in the surrounding area.</p> <p>Recorded – Saunders 2004a</p> | Block 662 District of Gungahlin | <p>Artefact scatter of LCV:</p> 1 2 3 4a 5 6a 7 8 9 |
| <p>GNRIF2</p> <p>An isolated stone artefact located on disturbed soil in a fibre-optic cable easement near a drainage line at the base of a hill.</p> <p>Recorded – Saunders 2004a</p> | Block 712 District of Gungahlin | <p>Artefact scatter of LCV:</p> 1 2 3 4a 5 6a 7 8 9 |

Schedule 2 : List of Aboriginal heritage places

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| <p>GNRIF3</p> <p>An isolated stone artefact located on a lower slope above a drainage line.</p> <p>Recorded – McKay 2004</p> | <p>Block 662 District of Gungahlin</p> | <p>Artefact scatter of LCV:</p> <p>1 2 3 4a 5 6a 7 8 9</p> |
| <p>GNR PAD1</p> <p>A potential archaeological deposit located on a low spurline in a grassy paddock. Associated with GNRAS1.</p> <p>Recorded – McKay 2004</p> | <p>Block 662 District of Gungahlin</p> | <p>PAD:</p> <p>1 2 3 4d 5 6a 6b 7 8 9</p> |
| <p>MPS</p> <p>A stone procurement site located beside a river consisting of a large, high density scatter of an estimated 200+ stone artefacts.</p> <p>Recorded – McKay 2003</p> | <p>Block 452 District of Stromlo</p> | <p>Artefact scatter and stone source of HCV:</p> <p>1 2 3 4c 5 6a 7 8 9 10 11 12</p> |
| <p>Mount Stromlo 1</p> <p>An isolated stone artefact located off a vehicle track on the steep western section of Mount Stromlo towards the western boundary.</p> <p>Recorded – Faulkner 2004</p> | <p>Block 38 District of Stromlo</p> | <p>Artefact scatter of LCV:</p> <p>1 2 3 4a 5 6a 7 8 9</p> |

Schedule 2 : List of Aboriginal heritage places

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| <p>Mount Stromlo 2</p> <p>An isolated stone artefact located in a highly disturbed area near the Observatory workshop building.</p> <p>Recorded – Faulkner 2004</p> | <p>Block 38 District of Stromlo</p> | <p>Artefact scatter of LCV:</p> <p>1 2 3 4a 5 6a 7 8 9</p> |
| <p>Bruce IF1</p> <p>An isolated stone artefact located on a very gently inclined basal slope, approximately 140m east of an ephemeral drainage line.</p> <p>Recorded – Saunders 2004b</p> | <p>Block 8 Section 28 Bruce</p> | <p>Artefact scatter of LCV:</p> <p>1 2 3 4a 5 6a 7 8 9</p> |
| <p>Bruce IF2</p> <p>An isolated stone artefact located on an unformed vehicle track, approximately 180m east of an ephemeral drainage line.</p> <p>Recorded – Saunders 2004b</p> | <p>Block 8 Section 28 Bruce</p> | <p>Artefact scatter of LCV:</p> <p>1 2 3 4a 5 6a 7 8 9</p> |
| <p>BSS1</p> <p>A low density scatter of at least three artefacts located on low gradient basal slopes above an intermittent drainage line.</p> <p>Recorded – Saunders 2004c</p> | <p>Block 10 District of Paddys River</p> | <p>Artefact scatter of LCV:</p> <p>1 2 3 4a 5 6a 7 8 9</p> |
| <p>BSS2</p> <p>An isolated stone artefact located in a low gradient basal slope on an open valley floor.</p> <p>Recorded – Saunders 2004c</p> | <p>Block 10 District of Paddys River</p> | <p>Artefact scatter of LCV:</p> <p>1 2 3 4a 5 6a 7 8 9</p> |

BACKGROUND INFORMATION**1. DESCRIPTION OF PLACES**

The places comprise 52 Aboriginal sites located within the Districts of Belconnen, Coree, Gungahlin, and Stromlo, ACT. The sites are scatters of stone artefacts including one stone procurement site (n=9), isolated stone artefacts (n=18) and potential archaeological deposits (n=25).

2. STATUS OF PLACES AT NOMINATION DATE:

The places are not previously recorded or entered into any ACT or Commonwealth Register.

3. BACKGROUND

A regional understanding of the variability, condition and conservation status of Aboriginal sites throughout the Territory is essential for the sound assessment of site significance and development of appropriate conservation strategies for Aboriginal heritage places and cultural landscapes. 'Site' is the common term for the locations where material remains relating to past Aboriginal occupation are in evidence, whereas the legislation refers to 'places'. These two terms are used interchangeably in this document.

These places were recorded as a result of cultural heritage surveys conducted during preliminary assessment for development proposals.

Unregistered Aboriginal sites are legally protected from disturbance, however the poor state of knowledge regarding their nature and location, and difficulties with their recognition and detection has undoubtedly already resulted in inadvertent disturbance to and destruction of a proportion of the record. The remaining sites, for the most part, are considered to be under potential threat due to future development pressure, with the exception of registered places and sites located in the small proportion of land in the Territory that is unsuitable for development.

4. CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

The three Aboriginal organisations defined as relevant regarding consultation on heritage matters according to the *Land (Planning and Environment) Act, 1991*, are strongly supportive of actions that increase awareness and protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage places.

Representatives of the three relevant Aboriginal organisations were invited to participate in the surveys and to provide comments on the significance of any Aboriginal heritage places discovered during the surveys. During the registration process the three relevant Aboriginal organisations have also had the opportunity to provide comments on the Aboriginal significance of these places and their management.

Copies of the draft register entry have also been circulated to other stakeholders, including the land owners/managers of the affected areas and parties that originally reported the sites.

5. ANALYSIS AGAINST THE CRITERIA SPECIFIED IN SCHEDULE 2 OF THE LAND (PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT) ACT 1991:

Criterion (i): A place which demonstrates a high degree of technical and/or creative achievement, by showing qualities of innovation or departure or representing a new achievement of its time.

Not applicable

Criterion (ii): A place which exhibits outstanding design or aesthetic qualities valued by the community or a cultural group.

Not applicable

Criterion (iii): A place which demonstrates a distinctive way of life, taste, tradition, religion, land use, custom, process, design or function which is no longer practised, is in danger of being lost, or is of exceptional interest.

The sites are all the product of past Aboriginal land-use and demonstrate varied aspects of a traditional way of life no longer practised in the ACT. The artefact scatters present in these localities demonstrate occupation and use of land by Aboriginal people, in the past.

Criterion (iv): A place which is highly valued by the community or a cultural group for reasons of strong or special religious, spiritual cultural, educational or social associations.

The places are all of significance to the Aboriginal community due to their association with traditional Aboriginal culture and their ability to demonstrate the comprehensive occupation of the ACT by their ancestors.

Criterion (v): A place which is the only known or only comparatively intact example of its type.

Not applicable

Criterion (vi): A place which is a notable example of a class of natural or cultural places or landscapes and which demonstrates the principal characteristics of that class.

Not applicable

Criterion (vii): A place which has strong or special associations with a person, group, event, development or cultural phase which played a significant part in local or national history.

These places have been identified as significant by the ACT Aboriginal community. They provide physical evidence of the past occupation and use of the areas in the Belconnen, Coree, Gungahlin and Stromlo Districts by Aboriginal people.

Criterion (viii): A place which represents the evolution of a natural landscape, including significant geological features, landforms, biota or natural processes.

Not applicable

Criterion (ix): A place which is a significant habitat or locality for the life cycle of native species; for rare, endangered or uncommon species; for species at the limits of their natural range; or for distinct occurrences of species.

Not applicable

Criterion (x): A place which exhibits unusual richness, diversity or significant transitions of flora, fauna or natural landscapes and their elements.

Not applicable

Criterion (xi): A place which demonstrates a likelihood of providing information which will contribute significantly to a wider understanding of natural or cultural history, by virtue of its use as a research site, teaching site, type locality or benchmark

These sites comprise part of a related body of evidence with potential to provide information about local and regional patterns of past Aboriginal land-use practices and settlement patterns. Some of the sites have potential to contain information that, via research, could provide information about past Aboriginal occupation of the locality and region.

6. REFERENCES

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Navin Officer. 2003a. Casey Concept Plan: cultural heritage assessment overview. Unpublished report to Purdon Associates.

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Saunders, P. 2004a. Gooroo Nature Reserve, ACT: Aboriginal archaeological survey of fire trails and creek crossings. Unpublished report to ACT Parks and Conservation Service.

Saunders, P. 2004b. Feasibility study for a multi-purpose cycling and wheeled-sports facility in the ACT: cultural heritage assessment of Diddams Close Park, Belconnen and Block 8 Section 28, Bruce. Unpublished report for Young Consulting Engineers Pty. Ltd.

Saunders, P. 2004c. Birrigai School Site cultural heritage assessment. Unpublished report to ACT Procurement Solutions.

ATTACHMENT B

Belconnen Farm History and Notes

HISTORY

Early History

Captain Charles Sturt was entitled to a grant of 5,000 acres (2,023 hectares) from the Crown for his exploration of the Murrumbidgee and Murray Rivers from November 1829 to May 1830, one of the most notable journeys of exploration in Australia. From a colony chiefly bound to the coastal plains, the vision of the colony was lifted to the vast reaches of land lying beyond the Great Dividing Range as far as the mouth of the Murray where the colony of South Australia was to be founded, its settlement directly influenced by Sturt's reports of the region.

Sturt did not take up a grant of land immediately. He was posted to Norfolk Island and then returned to England to convalesce from the effects of his journey of exploration. In 1837 he made a visit to Murray of Yarralumla. On that visit Sturt chose as his grant a site at the junction of the Molonglo and Murrumbidgee Rivers. He named the property 'The Grange'. It is not recorded that he visited the site but it is possible that he did, particularly as the land leading up to it on either side of the Molonglo was held by 'Yarralumla' and by acquaintances of the Murrays. Tradition has it that he visited Fairlight on the eastern banks of the Murrumbidgee opposite 'The Grange' where he is said to have planted seeds of trees including a Medlar. (Pers. Corn. Peter Webb). However he never occupied the land or farmed it.

In 1838 Charles Campbell of Duntroon acquired the land and farmed it, naming it 'Belconnen'. It is thought that Campbell gave it this name after an incident at the property when an aboriginal man used the word 'Belconnor', meaning 'I cannot find' (Shepherd, 2005). Campbell then decided to use that term for the property. The name has been variously spelt as Belconnel, Belconon or Belcomon. The property adjoined the districts known as Ginninderra and Weetangera. The general area was not known as Belconnen until the name was applied to the naval transmitting station when it was built nearby in 1938/9.

Campbell had a two-roomed stone house built at 'Belconnen' c. 1850 (Shepherd, 2005).

From 1877 Frederick Campbell, Charles' son, managed Duntroon in his father's absence overseas. On Charles' death in 1888 the estate passed to Frederick. In 1881 Frederick Campbell acquired 'Yarralumla' adding 'Belconnen' to it. In the 1880s 'Yarralumla' (including the land on the south of the Molonglo, the present 'Huntly' and 'Belconnen') was cleared and divided into 86 paddocks. The total estate was 39,000 acres (16,783 hectares).

The land was used for sheep and crops, oats, barley and wheat. Richard Vest, employed as an overseer on Yarralumla, is thought to have lived at Belconnen from 1882 to 1888. Other employees of Frederick Campbell to have lived there include D. McDonald from 1888-89 and Duncan McInnes from 1890-1904. Fencing, stables and yards were erected in 1880-90 and later the property was connected to Yarralumla by a private telephone line.

In July 1893 a deposit of galena (the natural mineral form of lead sulphide) was found on the property but has not been exploited, nor its worth ascertained.

By 1911 'Belconnen' included the stone house and a slab sided detached kitchen with an iron roof and stone chimney, attached by a small timber room to the two-roomed house. Animal enclosures, including a stockyard, poultry run and pig sty and a stable were close to the house. There were large sheep-yards to the south and a house and woolshed to the north.

The woolshed was in the part of the property remaining in New South Wales after resumption and was later moved around 1928-1930 (Shepherd, 2005).

'Yarralumla' including 'Belconnen' was resumed by the Commonwealth in 1913. It was subdivided and was advertised for lease 'under instructions from Colonel David Miller, Administrator'. Miller was the first administrator of the new Federal Capital Territory. He himself acquired 'Belconnen'. Three rooms for shearers and a galvanized iron laundry were built near the stone house. This is thought to have been occupied by Miller's son Selwyn and a worker, with Colonel Miller occupying a tent to the south west of the stone house. Selwyn worked the property and in January 1916 it was reported that he had produced 700 bags of wheat from a 70 acre crop and 300 tons of oaten and wheaten hay from a paddock of 100 acres. Colonel Miller left the district in 1921 but continued to lease the property till 1922 when Selwyn and his family left the district.

From 1st September 1924 Blocks 14 of 1230 acres, (470 hectares) and, later Block 16 of 620 acres (251 hectares) were rented and later leased by Austen Shepherd under soldier settler arrangements.



Figure 1: Plan Showing Federal Capital Land available for lease, 1919.
Shepherd's leases are highlighted in green.
National Library of Australia MAP G8984.C3G46 1920

Soldier Settlement Contextual History

In 1915 the Federal Government implemented the Soldier Settlement Scheme to encourage voluntary recruitment, to provide employment for returned servicemen and to increase post-war primary production. The scheme can be summarised as:

- The Commonwealth Government would supply loan funds to the States and Territories for a maximum £500 per soldier settler (later increased to £625);
- The States and Territories would make land available for sale to returned soldiers and would administer the scheme;
- There would be an initial period of low interest charges to settlers;
- The settlers would be paid sustenance during the establishment period; and
- The State would organise training facilities for settlers with no farming experience (Navin Officer, 2001: 6).

In 1919 land was made available in the FCT for settlement of returned Australian soldiers as a repatriation scheme. As happened elsewhere throughout Australia, large landholdings were resumed by the government and subdivided for closer settlement including for soldier settlement. In the FCT, this land included areas at Yarralumla (including Belconnen), Duntroon, Lanyon, Tuggeranong and Charnwood (Pfanner, 1999: 11).

Returned soldiers signed a very detailed lease agreement when they accepted a block, including issues about rental, filling in rabbit burrows and subletting (Pfanner, 1999: 13).

Life on most of the soldier settlement leases appears to have been difficult. Most of the settlers had little capital and many had no previous farming experience (Navin Officer, 2001: 6).

Soon after taking up their leases, it was usual for the soldier settlers to undertake fencing works, sink dams and place stock on their land (Pfanner, 1999: 14). In the FCT, soldier settlers were given an advance of £500 to £625

for these purposes. The settlers were also responsible for rabbit eradication and control of noxious weeds. In addition, Government officials undertook regular inspections (Navin Officer, 2001: 6).

Bad seasons in the late 1920s and the Depression soon meant that many soldier settlers struggled to pay back their advance.

Lessees gave up their blocks, many compulsorily, as the land was needed for other purposes (Pfanter, 1999: 22). In general terms, the Soldier Settler Schemes across Australia were considered to have failed. This is due to a number of factors, including 'small non-viable blocks on poor land which were unsuitable for farming, over-capitalisation due to the high price of stock and equipment, lack of previous farming experience, a fall in farm commodity prices in the critical years between 1920 and 1924 when soldier settlers were trying to establish their properties, and continued decline in the rural sector from 1924 and throughout the Depression' (Navin Officer, 2001: 6).

In the ACT, a greater flexibility in the leasehold system enabled struggling lessees to transfer or consolidate their leases, thereby saving the scheme in the ACT from total failure. Most of these leases were eventually resumed for the development of Canberra (Navin Officer, 2001: 7).

Belconnen

(Shepherd, 2005 is the source of much of the following information).

Austen Shepherd was born in 1887 and grew up on the family properties, Wheeo, Crookwell NSW and Teneriffe, Goulburn NSW. He trained as an agronomist at Hawkesbury Agricultural College, NSW. He worked for a period at Leeton. In 1915 Shepherd enlisted in a battery from Albury and served in Egypt and France achieving the rank of staff sergeant and was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal in 1919. He returned to Leeton in 1920 as a field officer for the NSW Department of Agriculture. While there he grew the first successful crop of rice using seed imported from the USA.

The land he applied for in the ACT was not specifically reserved for soldier settlers but they were given preference if they applied for it. Austen Shepherd did not receive the associated soldier settler grant until 1927. Later Shepherd also acquired the lease of nearby Block 16 from the Shooberts. Shepherd ran strong wool crossbreds and cattle and cropped wheat and oats. He was also one of the first to use pasture improvement techniques to increase production.

Shepherd succeeded where some other soldier settlers failed most probably because of his expertise and experience and the back up of other family properties.

Shepherd's daughter Jean Nugent Shepherd was born in Leeton. She was three when they moved to 'Belconnen'. His son Austen Robert Nugent Shepherd (Bob) was born three weeks before they moved there in 1925.

In 1936 a new woolshed and yards were built of materials sourced from Duntroon. Shearers' quarters were moved from near the stone house and re-erected beside the cook's house in 1938. By the 1930s the stone house had been extended with a weatherboard schoolroom to the north east and a large fibro-cement extension to the west comprising a sitting dining room, a verandah later enclosed and an office.

Initially the two Shepherd children were taught from correspondence courses by their mother. Later they went as boarders to Canberra Grammar and Canberra Girls' Grammar respectively. Bob later transferred to St Patrick's School in Goulburn. When Bob left school he worked on the property. Jean worked in the Customs Department. Both enlisted in the 2nd World War, Bob into the Navy and Jean into the coastal defences.

Initially Jean worked in Tamworth after the war where she married John McLennan. Austen Shepherd leased the property Spring Valley at Stromlo for Jean in 1947. Bob assisted on 'Belconnen', worked on another Shepherd property near Goulburn and at Adelong and assisted Jean on 'Spring Valley' after her husband died. Bob married Roma Gilmour, a distant connection of the poet Dame Mary Gilmour.

After the war, plans for a new homestead were designed by the architect Kenneth H. Oliphant. The building application was first submitted on 11 July 1947 and was approved one month later but the building permit was not issued until 26 May 1950. The builder was G.W. Furlonger (Peter Freeman Pty Ltd 1996). The concrete blocks were made by the men on the property and Bob assisted with moving the large amount of sand needed to make them.

In 1962 Bob, now a Canberra businessman, took over the lease of 'Belconnen' from his father who retired to live in Campbell, ACT. He ran merinos and cattle and grew wheat, rye and improved pasture. Bob established Shepherd Ford in the district of Belconnen in 1976. The property was rented to Peter Canham of the adjoining Strathnairn property and three houses were sublet as residences. The land was gradually encroached on for the Belconnen tip which has covered the cereal cropping area and the property has been reduced to 470 hectares.

In 2003 the lease was acquired by Corkhill Bros who continue to raise beef, though renting out the cottages.

Extraordinarily the fires of 1939, 1952 and 2003 missed this property.

DESCRIPTION

Historical boundaries of the property no longer remain intact (See Figure 1, above). The current Block boundary is a result of more recent developments in the area.

Exotic trees provide wind breaks around the stone cottage, and ornamental trees were planted for decorative effect beside the house designed by Kenneth Oliphant and the track through the group of structures. From parts of the homestead precinct there are spectacular views of the hills on the other side of the Murrumbidgee, the Baldy Range, the Wombat Ridge and the Brindabellas.

Three groups of structures are linked by the original track into the property. The homestead group contains a stone house c. 1850, the main Oliphant house erected in 1950 and a galvanized iron garage. It has a single Pine (*Pinus adiate*) beside the stone house, a windbreak of Radiata pine (*Pinus adiate*) and a grove of *Prunus spp.*

The stone house has 50 centimetre rubble stone walls, marked by twentieth century additions and changes. It is surrounded by a timber verandah, part of which has been enclosed to make two weatherboard rooms. Further additions by the Shepherds in the 1920s-30s were removed after the Oliphant house was built. The building retains its original plasterwork, Baltic pine ceilings, 4x4 pane timber sash windows with brick soldier arches and sills, pine linings to the internal reveals of openings and brick fireplaces and chimney. A new door was opened in the western corner in the 1930s.

The use of rubble stone is similar to the other Campbell buildings. The verandah roof and support posts are in need of repair. The two original stone rooms are in fair condition. The rooms are more spacious than those in Blundell's cottage and Mugga Mugga Cottage, but it is a smaller house than the other Campbell house, The Oaks and the more extensive 'Duntroon'. It is more comparable in size and design to the original small (three room) stone house built by Mowatt at 'Yarralumla' (Coulthard-Clark, C.D., 1988).

The Oliphant house, of patterned concrete brick with tiled roof, and a timber verandah is a plain structure reflecting none of Oliphant's more typical designs. Shepherd believes his father asked Oliphant for the very plain external design. It is a three bedroom house with separate lounge room and dining room leading off a central passageway. The kitchen opens onto a back lobby and the laundry in turn opens off that. The house has its back to the main (southerly) view over the Murrumbidgee but the front verandah, lounge and two bedrooms are oriented to the north for winter sun. The roof, of tiles from India, has never been satisfactory (Shepherd, 2005). The building is in fair condition, except for the front verandah which is in poor condition.

A woolshed, shearers' quarters, an ablutions/laundry building and machinery shed form a functional group and are located to the north-north-east of the homestead group. The materials for each of these are described in Attachment A. They were constructed by the Shepherd family in the 1930s. The cook's house is the most southerly of the set of buildings. The three room shearers' quarters to the north of the cook's house were possibly built by Miller and originally lay to the east of the stone house. They were moved by Bob Shepherd and re-erected by carpenters in their current site. A wind break of Cypress (*Cupressus spp.*) and Pines (*Pinus spp.*) shelter the group. The plantings date from the 1960s. A worker's house

built in the 1950s lies on the other side of the road into the property. It and two of the structures in the shearers' quarters contain asbestos. These buildings are in fair to poor condition.

Also on the property is a fibro and galvanized iron station hands' cottage. Construction details for the ancillary structures are at Appendix A.

Elms (*Ulmus spp.*) obscure the tip face from the site to the north. Kentish cherries (*Prunus spp.*) possibly planted by Campbell, Austen Shepherd's orchard and vegetable garden and most garden plants have disappeared. (Shepherd, 2005)

Although all these structures are in discrete groups they are visually linked within a tilted saucer shaped slope of land that faces south and south west to the Brindabellas and other ranges.

The property had a well that has disappeared under a retention pond associated with the Belconnen tip. It lay about 200 metres from the stone house to the north. Water from a spring on Spring Creek opposite the stone house was pumped to a tank beside the house.

Despite the Belconnen tip to the north which is partly screened from the buildings by trees and power lines crossing the property on the far side of Spring Creek the landscape setting of Belconnen Farm to the north, west and south retains the nineteenth century landscape patterns established by Frederick Campbell. Changes made since 1913 other than those referred to above have reinforced these patterns and have not compromised the dramatic views from the property buildings.

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| | | | |
|-------|------------------------------------|---------|---|
| 1 | Residence | c. 1850 | Stone, galvanised iron, timber |
| x | Stables, yards | 1894 | Slab, galvanised iron, morticed post and rail: rebuilt 1960s. The 1898 shed was x built by James Kilby and Evan Cameron The |
| x | Sheep yards | c. 1900 | Timber, post and rail |
| x | Sheep yards | 1936 | Sawn timber from Black Mountain. Built by Bob Shepherd. Bricks from General Legge's place. |
| 5 | Woolshed | 1936 | Sawn timber and galvanised iron from the old Duntroon mess |
| 6 | Shearers' quarters | | Jarra timber, galvanised iron and fibro cement sheet |
| | (a) sleeping | c.1920 | (Moved 1947) Originally built by Miller |
| | (b) Kitchen | c. 1938 | |
| | (c) Shower | c. 1938 | |
| x | (d) Cooks house. | C1938 | Bay window built c. 1980/90 |
| x | Office | C.1930 | Galvanised iron and fibro cement ??? |
| 8 | Meat House | C.1938 | Galvanised iron & timber |
| x | Bore | c.1940 | Steel windmill and casing |
| x | Chicken yard | c.1940 | Wire netting, galvanised iron |
| 11 | Spray dip | c.1947 | Galvanised iron, steel |
| 12 | Homestead | 1950 | Concrete block (coloured) and terracotta tile |
| 13 | Garage | 1950s | Galvanised iron and timber |
| 14 | Station hand's cottage | 1959 | Fibro cement and galvanised iron |
| 15 | Plunge dip | 1960s | Concrete |
| 16 | Machinery shed | 1970s | Galvanised iron and timber |
| 17 | Water tanks | 1972 | Concrete and galvanised iron |
| Trees | Botanical Name | | Common Name |
| 18 | <i>Pinus radiata</i> | | Pine, Radiata pine, Monterey pine |
| 19 | <i>Salix babylonica</i> | | Weeping willow |
| 20 | <i>Ulmus spp</i> | | Elms |
| 21 | <i>Prunus spp.</i> | | Plum |
| 22 | <i>Cupressus spp.</i> | | Cypress |
| 23 | <i>Tieghemopanax sambucifolius</i> | | Elderberry |
| 24 | <i>Pinus spp.</i> | | Pine |

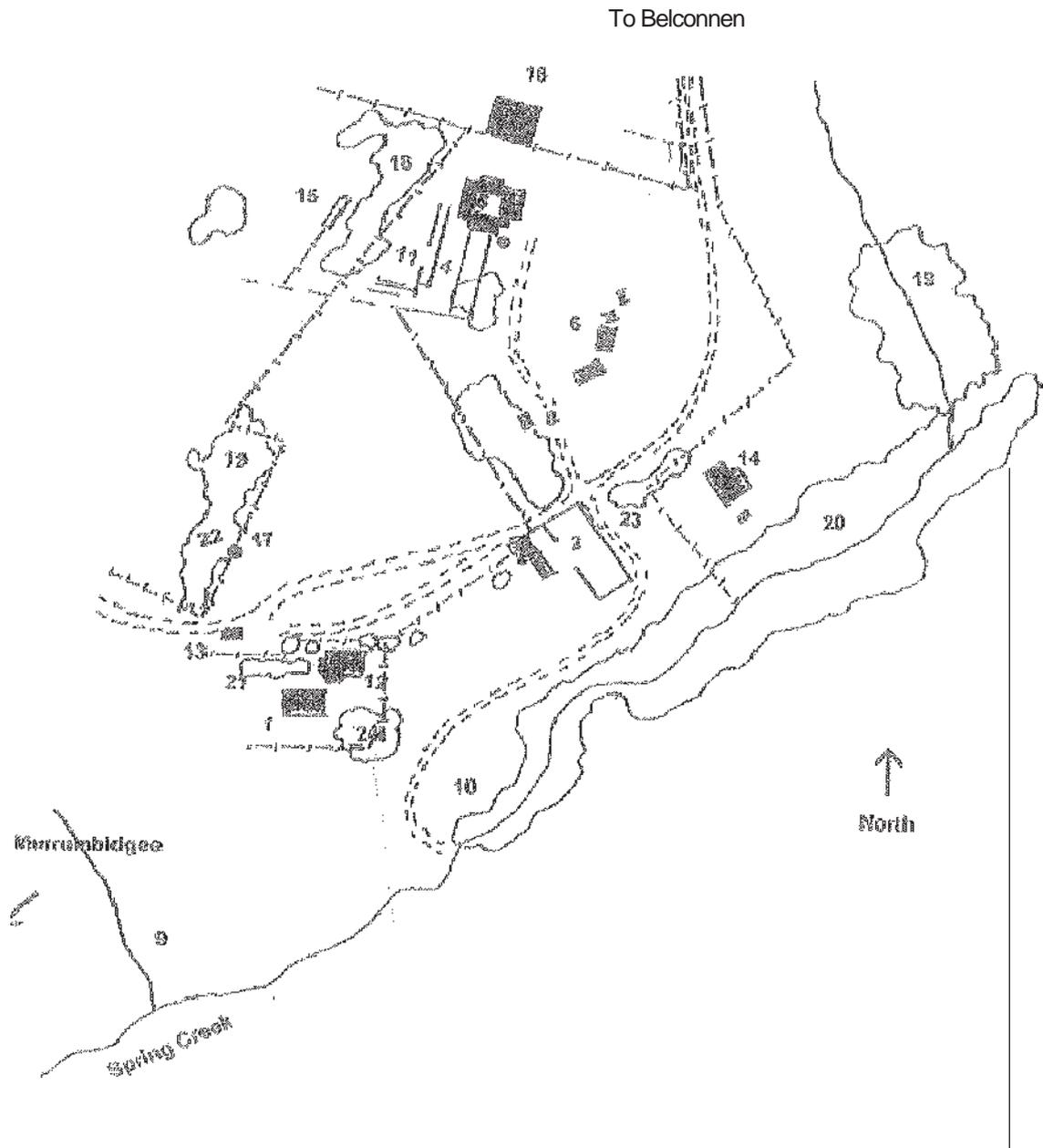


Figure 2
Site plan of Belconnen property, Site Plan Roger Hobbs 1995 amended by Judith Baskin 2004.
Not to Scale

Refer to Attachment B for Key

ATTACHMENT C

Summary of Natural Heritage Values in the West Belconnen Area

Natural Heritage Values in the West Belconnen Area**A review of studies undertaken for The Riverview Group Pty Ltd for****Eric Martin & Associates.**

There are several primary sources of information of the natural values of the West Belconnen area. Each is based on recent ecological surveys but only one covers land situated in both the ACT and NSW. These studies are:

- Kevin Mills & Associates (2009a). Preliminary Assessment, Land at West Molonglo and Ginninderra Creek, New South Wales, Australian Capital Territory. Report prepared for The Riverview Group, January.
- Kevin Mills & Associates (2009b). Further Flora and Fauna Studies, Land at West Molonglo and Ginninderra Creek, New South Wales, Australian Capital Territory. Report prepared for The Riverview Group, July.
- Eco Logical Australia (2010). Draft Strategic Assessment Report of the Molonglo Valley Plan for the Protection of Matters of National Environmental Significance.
- Osborne, W and Wong D (2010) The extent of Potential Habitat for the Pink-tailed Worm Lizard (*Aprasia parapulchella*) in the West Molonglo Investigation Area, ACT. (Report commissioned by ACT Planning and Land Authority).

Some supplementary information is contained in:

- Geoff Butler and Associates (2009). Conservation Management Plan for Part of Ginninderra Creek.

The studies by both Eco Logical and Osborne and Wong cover a smaller area (called West Molonglo) than the studies by Mills & Associates, but to the extent that the two study areas overlap the results are complementary. Differences in reporting the extent of box-gum woodland are likely to be largely the result of different methodologies operating at different scales.

The key natural assets identified in these studies can be summarised as: (1) the Murrumbidgee River corridor and associated lizard habitat, (2) some relatively small areas of native woodland vegetation, and (3) natural features such as creeks and remnant mature trees.

Natural features protected under both ACT and Commonwealth legislation (*Nature Conservation Act 1980* (ACT); *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (C'th)) are recorded as present in the West Belconnen area. These are:

- *White Box - Yellow Box - Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland* (Box-Gum Woodland); and
- Pink-tailed Worm Lizard (*Aprasia parapulchella*).

Several threatened species and one ecological community were assessed by the Eco Logical study as having the potential to be identified in the area, but were not recorded. However the Superb Parrot was recorded by Mills & Associates.

Natural Temperate Grassland of the Southern Tablelands of NSW and the ACT (Natural Temperate Grassland) (ACT and Commonwealth Acts).

Superb Parrot (*Polytelis swainsonii*) (ACT and Commonwealth Acts).

Swift Parrot (*Lathamus discolor*) (ACT and Commonwealth Acts).

Rainbow Bee-eater (*Merops ornatus*) (Commonwealth Act).

An unlisted community, but one that some experts consider to be so reduced in distribution as to warrant consideration as an endangered ecological community, is found in the river

corridor and to a small extent along Ginninderra Creek. This community is the Fringing Riverine Woodland (River Oak *Casuarina cunninghamiana*) and its extent in West Belconnen is recorded by Mills & Associates.

The surveys undertaken by Mills & Associates also targeted a group of species listed as threatened under NSW legislation (*Threatened Species and Communities Act (1995)*). One of these species (the Speckled Warbler) was recorded in the ACT portion of the study area, but not the NSW portion.

Box-Gum Woodland

The environmental study carried out by Eco Logical as part of the Commonwealth's strategic assessment identified 64 hectares of box-gum woodland within West Molonglo and its immediate surrounds.

This area includes part of the box-gum woodland identified in the study by Mills & Associates, but the latter study has also identified some box-gum woodland outside Eco Logical's woodland area. Further study of this is desirable if the woodland (extent and composition) mapped by two surveys is to be reconciled. The two surveys were carried out using different methodologies and in different seasonal conditions. Subsequent rainfall in 2010 may also influence the distribution and abundance of the native species used to define the extent of a woodland patch. Note that the definition of the box-gum woodland community includes land from which the trees have been removed (secondary grassland).

Pink-tailed Worm Lizard

The Pink-tailed Worm Lizard *Aprasia parapulchella* is listed as a vulnerable species under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (C'th)*, the *Nature Conservation Act 1980 (ACT)* and the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 (NSW)*. The species is included in Action Plan 29 (Rivers for Wildlife: Conservation Strategy for the Murrumbidgee and Molonglo River Corridors – ACT Government 2007). It appears that the ACT is the main stronghold for the species (Osborne and Wong) with surveys showing it to have a patchy distribution along the rocky slopes of the Murrumbidgee and Molonglo River valleys and on some outlying hills. *Aprasia* has recently been found to be common to the south of Queanbeyan (K. Mills pers. comm. 2009).

The valleys of the Molonglo and Murrumbidgee rivers have been extensively surveyed for potential habitat of the Pink-tailed worm Lizard (*Aprasia parapulchella*). Suitable habitat in the West Belconnen area has been mapped in detail by (Mills & Associates, Osborne and Wong).

Most of the rocky habitat containing the worm lizard is within the Murrumbidgee River corridor (as defined by the Territory Plan) that is identified as not available for development. However, as pointed out by Mills & Associates, the "*boundary for the Murrumbidgee River corridor reserve is generally a series of straight lines at the eastern edge of the top of the steep land falling towards the river. This boundary is rather arbitrary but is apparently designed to cover the river valley. The purpose of this part of the investigation was to delineate a reserve boundary with a view to rationalising it with the significant ground features identified earlier in this study.*" Mills & Associates proposed extending the corridor into NSW along the river valley, using the same criteria. The extent to which some small outliers of recorded occurrence or potentially suitable habitat will be impacted by the proposed development (including habitat located along tributary creeks and over woodland patches to the east of the river valley) is still to be determined as part of more detailed planning.

River Oak Forest

Stands of River Oak *Casuarina cunninghamiana* occur along the Murrumbidgee River on the western edge of West Belconnen. This forest type occupies restricted environmental conditions and is now greatly reduced in extent, so all stands are important. The ACT Aquatic Species and Riparian Zone Conservation Strategy (ACT Government 2007) recognises the importance of riparian zones for the protection of threatened species, riparian vegetation and the provision of habitat links. The strategy notes the importance of incorporating riparian zone needs in considering changes in land use in the West Molonglo area. River Oak is the dominant tree within the riparian zone along the Murrumbidgee River. The length of the river fronting the study area is about 15 kilometres.

The stands of River Oak along the river and Ginninderra Creek adjacent to the study area were mapped through a combination of field survey and colour aerial photograph interpretation by Mills & Associates.

Other Natural Features

Mills & Associates have documented a range of natural features that are not regarded as threatened (that is do not fall within the legislated definitions of listed threatened species and ecological communities). Nevertheless they may be of value to the future of West Belconnen. They include naturally occurring peppermint/stringybark woodland, planted woodland/copses of trees, exotic grassland and isolated 'paddock' trees. The extent to which any of these features is retained within the fabric of the planned development will be the subject of more detailed planning.

Ginninderra Creek is a relatively major creek along the far northern edge of the study area, in NSW. No significant features were found there in the previous preliminary study, although the presence of a significant riparian corridor was identified (Kevin Mills & Associates 2009b). The purpose here is to delineate a riparian habitat corridor based on field (ground-truthed) features, map the rock outcrops present, map stands of River Oak *Casuarina cunninghamiana* and determine if native grassland occurs in the area. The above features were mapped adjacent to the creek during the field investigation, being marked directly onto a colour aerial photograph.

Swift Parrot, Superb Parrot and Rainbow Bee-eater

The Molonglo Valley is not known as an important area for the Swift Parrot, Superb Parrot and Rainbow Bee-Eater. However, these species are known to occur within woodland communities such as Box-Gum Woodland and there is a lack of targeted survey data for them within the Molonglo Valley.

The Commonwealth Government's draft Plan for the Molonglo Valley proposes a number of management measures for box-gum woodland in West Molonglo. These include requirements to protect areas of habitat through the use of conservation buffers; employ sensitive fire management practices; fence areas of high value to control access; manage weeds; control feral animals; manage hydrological processes; and undertake appropriate monitoring and community education.